DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 293 662 PS 017 334

TITLE	Parents: The Missing Link in Education Reform. Hearing Before the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, First Session (Indianapolis, Indiana, November 16, 1987).
INSTITUTION	Congress of the U.S., Washington, DC. House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	134p.; Contains some pages of small type.
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock No. 052-070-06453-6, $3.50).
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Acceleration (Education); *Community Programs; Educational Change; Educational Legislation; Educationally Disadvantaged; Elementary Education; Hearings; Middle Schools; *Models; *Parent Participation; Program Descriptions; *Program Implementation; *State Programs; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS	Congress 100th; *Parents as Teachers

ABSTRACT

A hearing was held to discuss models for successful parent involvement in education and to bring attention to several state and local programs that facilitate home-school partnerships. Two panels of witnesses from several states testified about: (1) teacher's ways of involving parents in the classroom; (2) ways in which parental involvement can help a school system; (3) ways in which the Chicago Public Schools have systematically alienated parents; (4) barriers to active parent involvement and ways of eliminating the barriers; (5) the Parents as Teachers concept, including an executive evaluation summary of Missouri's New Parents as Teachers Project and the text of the Missouri Early Childhood Development Act; (6) parent involvement in schools that aim to accelerate disadvantaged students' learning to grade level; (7) barriers and successes of parent involvement in major reform of middle schools; (8) the Parents in Touch program for increasing parent involvement in parent/teacher conferences; (9) outcomes of the mandating of parent involvement through election to school advisory councils serving South Carolina schools; (10) the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY); and (11) state department of education parent involvement activities. Included are views of the Indiana Congress of Parents and Teachers and case summaries of problems parents have faced in encounters with school bureaucracies. (RH)

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PARENTS: THE MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION REFORM

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ED293662

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN INDIANAPOLIS, IN, NOVEMBER 16, 1987

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

PS017334

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
81-138 WASHINGTON : 1988

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"PARENTS: THE MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION REFORM"

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1987

House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families,
Indianapolis, IN.

The Select Committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:40 a.m., in the Board Room, Indiana Department of Education, 120 East Walnut Street, Indianapolis, IN, Hon. Dan Coats presiding.

Members present: Representative Coats.

Staff present: Karabelle Pizzigati, professional staff; Timothy Gilligan, professional staff; and Carol Statuto, minority deputy staff director.

Mr. Coats. Good morning. My name is Dan Coats. I am the ranking minority member on the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families.

Unfortunately, Chairman Miller had a plane connection through Denver from San Francisco last evening. As we're all aware, the unfortunate tragedy in Denver has closed part of that airport and he was not able to make his connections. We heard from him at 3:00 a.m. still attempting to make an alternate plane connection in order to be here this morning. I don't know that he's going to be able to do that and we regret that that's the case. That means that I will be chairing the committee.

I am very much pleased to be back here in my home State of Indiana. I thank Chairman Miller and his staff for the efforts they made in arranging with us to hold what I think is an important hearing on an important topic.

We are here today to discuss the models for successful parent involvement and to bring attention to several State and local programs that facilitate home/school partnerships.

Two recent reports underscore the importance of establishing home/school ties in the relevance of today's hearing to education reform. Last month the Committee for Economic Development, a panel of eminent business leaders, called parental involvement in education "the key to improving the educational prospects of disadvantaged children." In an excellent booklet published this year by the U.S. Department of Education, the importance of paying attention to what was referred to as the "curriculum of the home" was emphasized. The research findings state that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how economically well off the family is.

Both of these timely reports clearly show that when parents and teachers work together the outcomes are positive for children. This points to an exciting direction for the future. The programs represented today at this hearing are nationally acclaimed models of home/school collaboration that work. The programs to be showcased today clearly show that the mutual interdependence of home and school can serve in the best interest of the children. If educators want support from families, they need to be sensitive to substantive educational concerns expressed by the families in their school systems. And if parents want schools to include them in developing some of their educational practices, then parents need to accept some of their responsibilities to participate and to support the education of their children.

Obviously, much of what children need to know, both before and during the schooling experience, is learned at home. At the same time, schools have definite contributions to make to families and to society for enhancing individual student outcomes as well as preparing a generation to sit in the very seats that we now hold.

The mutual support that can come from true working partnerships between home and school can provide encouragement to parents to affirm and perform their role as the primary teachers in the child's first classroom, the home. In turn, this partnership would offer support for educators to do what they are in the classroom to do; that is, teach basic skills.

There is a very disturbing tendency in our society to ignore the obvious when it comes to our children's needs. One of the critical barriers to achieving home/school partnerships is not money. It is not expertise. It is taking the time to commit to the child and ultimately to the partnership between home and school. This is not to say that more money and training are not critical to facilitating home/school ties but, rather, that ultimately the success of these endeavors comes down to committing the essential ingredient—time.

As a father, I know that establishing home/school ties as an important priority means that I will have to make choices about how to structure my time to allow for meaningful involvement with my children and with their schools. Frankly, I believe that what is most exciting about all of these model programs that will be discussed today is that these programs represent families across the Nation, from California, Missouri, South Carolina, Illinois, Arkansas and here in Indiana, that are willing to commit the time to work with their children and with their schools to provide their children's learning. What is clear to me is that these children will learn more than skills through this process. Children whose parents are involved in their education will learn to value leaning as a lifelong, continuous process that enhances one's character and enables one to better face the challenges of the world of work and family life. While parent involvement is central to all of the innovations we will hear about today, each program is uniquely tailored to be responsive to families in particular communities.

In Indiana, the Department of Education has developed a comprehensive plan to encourage parental involvement in education. The A-Plus Program for Educational Excellence proposed by Governor Orr, along with State Superintendent Dean Evans, is the most comprehensive educational improvement package in the State's history. The A-Plus Program is aimed at heightened aspirations, increased achievement, and more accountability. The "Parents In Touch" program in the Indianapolis public schools includes services such as the dial-a-teacher homework assistance hotline for both students and parents. In addition to parent-teacher conferences, the parent focus series is available to parents to aid them in understanding their child's academic and social progress.

The Parents as Teachers program in Missouri was designed to help parents give their children the best possible start in life by laying a foundation of parental involvement in the education and development of young children from birth to age 3. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, titled HIPPY, in Arkansas, is primarily a reading readiness initiative aimed at four-year-olds from disadvantaged families. To participate in the program, children must be four years of age and parents must agree to allot 15 minutes per day for 30 weeks for each of the next two years.

Not all of the home/school partnerships are formalized programs. Diane Winters, a teacher at Weisser Park School in my home district in Fort Wayne, IN, will discuss how she as a classroom teacher has initiated several activities designed to encourage parents to become more involved in everyday activities of the classroom.

Whether the program is aimed at preschool children or middle school children or even high school students, the critical ingredient for success is a commitment to home/school partnerships. To achieve this collaboration, a change in societal priorities is needed to come to terms with what is really important to children's school achievement, and that is the mutual support of both home and school. The testimony that will be presented today is about reordering priorities to enable all children to become all that they can be.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN DAN COATS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA, AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

I am very pleased to be here today in Indiana and I thank Chairman Miller for coming to my home state to hold a hearing on parent involvement in education. We are here today to discuss the models for successful parent involvement and to bring attention to several state and local programs that facilitate home-school partnerships.

Two recent reports underscore the importance of establishing home-school ties and the relevance of today's hearing to education reform. Last month, the Committee for Economic Development, a panel of eminent business leaders, called parental involvement in education "the key to improving the educational prospects of disadvantaged children." (CED, 1987, p. 49).

In an excellent booklet published this year by the U.S. Department of Education, the importance of paying attention to what was referred to as the "curriculum of the home" was emphasized. The research findings cited state that "parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off the family is." (What Works, 1987, p. 5). Both of these timely reports clearly show that when parents and teachers work together the outcomes are positive for children. This points to an exciting direction for the future.

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Without objection, I will ask that the statement of Chairman Miller be placed in the record.

[Opening statement of Congressman George Miller follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND CHAIRMAN, SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

The Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families is pleased to be in Indianapolis this morning to examine a critical facet of our children's education: the participation of their parents. Thanks to Congressman Dan Coats, the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, we have scheduled this hearing in conjunction with the second annual "Maintaining Active Parent Partnerships" conference.

Parents' involvement in their children's schooling is more than just common sense. Targeted studies increasingly have found that when a mother or father regularly reads with his or her child at home, or takes on tasks in the classroom, attends PTA meetings, or participates in school governance, the effects on children are positive. Whether a child is very young or has already reached high school, the evidence suggests that active participation by parents can significantly enhance their children's attendance, academic achievement, and expectations.

Why, then, are careful, deliberate and systemic efforts to encourage parent involvement so rare? Why have national and state education reform movements largely failed to promote meaningful roles for parents? And why are families so often characterized as part of the problem when they are clearly a key to the solution?

These are important questions for policymakers seeking to generate greater school success, especially for the growing proportion of low-income and minority children whose prospects for a productive adulthood are imperiled by limited educational opportunities.

Economic and demographic trends indicate a growing number of children who are at risk of educational failure. Of today's four- and five-year-olds: one in four is poor; one in five is at risk of becoming a teenage parent; and one in seven is at risk of dropping out of school.

In addition, 60% of today's school-age children live in families where both parents or the only parent are in the workforce.

Failure to educate these children will have severe consequences for our nation's ability to compete in the international marketplace as well as for the stability of family and community life.

These changing demographic and social realities require creative initiatives by educators to open new opportunities for parental involvement in their children's education.

At this hearing we will learn about promising local programs—from California to South Carolina. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses who have come to Indianapolis from communities around the nation.

"PARENTS: THE MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION REFORM"—A FACT SHEET

PARENT INVOLVEMENT RAISES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ENHANCES DEVELOPMENT FOR EVERY AGE GROUP

Preschool

Children under age 3, whose parents participated in Missouri's new Parents as Teachers Project (NPAT), "consistently scored significantly higher on all measures of intelligence, achievement, auditory comprehension, verbal ability and language ability" than their peers, according to an independent evaluation. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1985)

Head Start, the federally funded early childhood education program for low-income children and in which parent involvement is key, has been shown to improve students' academic achievement and to help participating parents improve their own educational and economic status. (Hubbell et al., 1985; Zigler et al., 1979)

Elementary and Secondary Schools

A study of Maryland third and fifth graders indicated that students in classrooms of teachers who frequently use parent involvement in learning activites make greater reading gains than students in other teachers' classrooms. (Epstein, In press)

Students in grades three through five in seven New Haven schools employing a broad-based parent involvement program, showed significantly greater improvement in behavior, attendance, and classroom reading grades than students in the control group. (Haynes and Comer, Unpublished paper, 1987)

A long-term program to change the governance and organization of two of the lowest achieving inner-city New Haven, Connecticut elementary schools, partly by including substantial parent involvement, resulted in bringing the students up to grade level. One school moved from 20th in reading and 31st in math to 10th place in both among all New Haven schools. And within the first five years of the program, both schools attained the best attendance records in the city. (Comer, 1984 and 1980)

A study of sixth graders in Oakland, California, found that children whose parents spend time with them in educational activities or are involved in school activities, achieve more in school, regardless of socioeconomic status. (Benson, 1980)

A study of 16- and 18-year-old students found that students whose mothers had attended at least one PTA meeting were 10% less likely to be enrolled below grade level. (U.S. Department of Education, 1986)

UNDERACHIEVEMENT OF U.S. STUDENTS UNDERSCORES NEED FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Less than 75% of all 18 and 19 year olds have finished high school. (U.S. Department of Education, 1986)

90% of the jobs created in New York City over the next 12 years will require a high school diploma, yet only ⅔ of the City's students graduate from high school. (Committee for Economic Development, 1987)

In Chicago, only half the students who enter high school graduate. (Lefkowitz, 1987)

Roughly ⅓ of all high school students are one year behind grade level. Another 5% are at least two years behind. Students held back a grade are up to four times more likely to drop out than those who are not. (Institute for Educational Leadership, March 1987; Census Bureau, 1986)

U.S. children scored 6 percentage points below the mean for the 14 developed countries participating in the Second International Mathematics Study. (Livingstone, June 1985)

INCREASING NUMBERS, DIVERSITY, AND IMPOVERISHMENT OF STUDENTS MEANS GREATER CHALLENGE TO ASSURE MEANINGFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

An estimated 45.3 million students were enrolled in elementary and secondary education in the fall of 1986, declining 2% since from 1980 and more than 11% since 1970. By 1990, enrollment is again expected to surpass 1980 levels. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1987; U.S. Department of Education, 1987)

Between 1970 and 1986, the percentage of children under age 18 living in single parent households increased from 11.8% to 23.5%. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1987)

By 1995, ⅔ of all pre-school children (14.6 million) will have mothers in the work force. Four out of five children between the ages of 7 and 18 are expected to have working mothers. (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1986; Marx, 1987)

Between 1970 and 1984, the latest year for which statistics are available, minority enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools increased from 21% to 30% of total enrollment. (U.S. Department of Education, 1986; U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1972)

In 1985, 20% of all children lived in impoverished families, compared to 15% in 1970. This includes 43% of black children, and more than ⅓ of Hispanic children, and less than ⅕ of white children. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1987)

On average, each year a child lives in poverty increases the likelihood by 2 percentage points that he or she will fall behind grade level. Sixteen year olds who had spent eight or more years in poverty during childhood were almost twice as likely to be found enrolled below grade level than were children who had spent two or fewer years in poverty. (U.S. Department of Education, 1986)

Between 1970 and 1986, the percentage of children living in single parent households increased from 11.8% to 23.5%. In 1986, only 64% of all children were living with both biological parents. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1987)

Mr. Coats. I would also like to inform those of you that are here today that the record will be kept open for a two-week period of time so that you might submit any comments to our record. We encourage you to do so. We look forward to the testimony of the witnesses, but we also look forward to any of you who might want to submit information for our record. We will keep our record open by unanimous consent for a two-week period of time to do that.

I would now like to call to the stand Dr. James Adams, Superintendent of the Indianapolis Public Schools, who wishes to formally welcome us to Indianapolis. Dr. Adams, we thank you for your cooperation in holding this hearing and we thank you for your willingness to attend this morning.

STATEMENT OF JAMES ADAMS, SUPERINTENDENT, INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. ADAMS. Congressman Coats, we are very delighted you can be here this morning. We are sorry to hear that Chairman Miller could not make it because of the tragedy in Denver that happened yesterday.

On behalf of the Board of School Commissioners and the entire Indianapolis community, we are delighted to be acting as the host for another national parent involvement conference. We are particularly pleased that this congressional field hearing is being held in IPS today. We feel that this is a topic that is on the cutting edge in American education and we're just delighted that you're here conducting this public hearing.

Throughout this Nation we are searching for ways to get our parents more involved in the schools, and all the way from research and attitude of teachers, it is felt today that schools can be improved and the learning of children will be improved if we get parents involved in the actual operation of schools.

There was a time when we educators said leave education to us and we'll get the job done for you, but we know today that if we're going to get the job accomplished, it's going to take a cooperative, collaborative effort between all parties, including parents, teachers, administrators, board members and citizens working together.

We are looking forward to the testimony that you are about to receive today. We hope that this information will be useful to the Congress as you go about your task of making some tough decisions concerning education. We know it is a tough time to try to balance the budget and to deal with deficits, but education, in our opinion, is at the heart of what is happening in this Nation and we certainly appreciate your interest in being here today.

Welcome. If there is anything we can do to help, just let us know.

Mr. COATS. Thank you very much, Dr. Adams.

Let me now call our first panel, which consists of Diane Winters, who is a parent/teacher at Weisser Park School in Fort Wayne, IN; Elaine Amerson, who is a parent from Indianapolis, IN; Joan Jeter Slay, a parent and training coordinator, Designs for Change, Chicago, IL; Dr. Yvonne Chan, the principal of Sylmar Elementary School in Sylmar, CA; and Mildred Winter, Director, Parents as Teachers, University of Missouri, St. Louis, MO.

If our panelists would come forward and take their seats at the witness table, we will hear from them. Let me just state that, to the extent that you can summarize or keep your opening statements limited, that would allow more time for discussion and questions. We do appreciate each one of you taking the opportunity and the time to be with us, and we look forward to hearing your statements.

Diane, we would like to start with you. Tell us about your involvement and your program.

STATEMENT OF DIANE G. WINTERS, TEACHER/PARENT, WEISSER PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FORT WAYNE, IN

Ms. WINTERS. Thank you, Congressman Coats. It is with great pride that I have the opportunity to speak today, being a fellow Fort Waynian, and to share with you some things that I have done in the classroom to help improve one of my favorite topics, which is: parent involvement. As a parent and teacher, I know there is a great need to do things that do involve parents in the classroom.

To work with a child and not with the parent is like working with only part of the pieces of a puzzle. It would be like a person who put a puzzle together with a thousand pieces, and then as he finished found the center part missing. That is the way I feel in working with a child without working with the parent.

Many people believe that parents don't have the time nor the desire to work with students in a classroom, but I've found the opposite to be true.

Going on the basis of the study that Dr. Bennett and the Department of Education published in 1986, that parents were, indeed, the most important factor in correlating success with their students. I would like to share with you some of the things that I have done.

Too often parents feel that going to school is an invasion of "hallowed ground". They feel they have no place nor right in the school environment, unless there is a specific purpose for their visit. If this be the case, then I think it is the responsibility of educators to make them feel welcome and to feel necessary. After all, parents are our biggest asset.

There are many ways in which they can be made to feel welcome. Two 15-minute conferences per school year to me is not enough, nor is one "back to school" night enough time to share the things that parents have to offer.

At the beginning of each school year I send a welcome letter to the homes of all of my students. This initially sets the rapport, not only between the child and the school, but also between the parent and the teacher. I share with them some things that I did over the summer and tell them how much I am looking forward to them coming to school that year.

Following that, on the first day of school, most often two parents bring their child to school on the first day. On that day I give them a packet which is called "Welcome to the Third Grade, Room 211." Inside that packet there is a letter of welcome, and also an outline for all of the class subjects and how the grades are made and so forth, the requirements, et cetera. But on the next page there are some special things to know about, and I include the parents in all of these.

One of the things I do is something called "All About Me". During this particular week every child does have one week. The parent receives the outline so that they know when their child's week is so they can plan to attend. I encourage parents to come and share their hobbies, or their careers, or anything of interest that they might have. We usually play something called "20 Questions," where the students have an opportunity to ask yes or no questions of the parent and try to guess what their occupation or hobby is. This proves interesting for the parent as well as for the students.

Another thing I do is something called the "Lunch Bunch", in which a note is sent home to the parent honoring all children who have birthdays in that particular month. In that particular month, all students are taken out to lunch, and they consider that to be a treat.

Classroom parties have always been a time when other teachers, I'm sure, have involved parents. I have found that most of the parents really enjoy setting up and planning the parties, so I usually leave that to them.

The other thing that I do, and a lot of people have found unique, is that I have an activity that I call "snack and chat". This is an informal meeting time for parents and teachers to get to know each other. We set aside one hour at the end of each month in which parents are invited to come in over coffee and cookies, and we sit around and talk about anything that might be on their minds. Many times it is very informal and sometimes it's a planned activity. It might be something regarding sibling rivalry or motivation in how to get your child to read more, whatever the parents feels is a necessary topic. These meetings are scheduled only on the months when there are no other parent conferences scheduled at that time.

Input from parents is always encouraged. I've found that during the snack and chat time I've had an opportunity to find out more things about the students than I did in the normal classroom setting. Parents seem to use it as a support group. They share ideas and problems and so forth. They see during that time some of the things that perhaps they thought were unusual about their child is not so and they can support each other with ideas and suggestions on how to make those things improve, or to encourage them more.

In the packet that they receive there is also an outline of required book reports. The other day I had a mother tell me that she is having trouble having her son go to bed at night because he spends two hours before bed time reading. I thought well, that's a pretty nice problem to have, concerning the fact that this was a child that didn't enjoy reading before. But because he is given an outline and required to do book reports on a monthly basis—and they vary, starting in September with fables, October is mysteries or adventures, and November poetry—we don't require one in December. We have in December what we call book exchange. In January there's fiction, in February there's biography or autobiography, in March there's non-fiction, in April there's an award book, and in May they have a free choice. Parents have often commented that they felt this was a very good asset to the program and a requirement that ends up making children enjoy reading. So even though this is something that the students do themselves, the parents find it is a good addition to the program.

There are many ways that parents can be supportive and involved in an ongoing way from the very beginning of a child's formal education. The annual back-to-school night is one way in which I think the middle school and high schools use basically as a way of getting parents involved. However, they are not really adequate in letting you know what goes on in a child's program.

As a parent—I have a daughter who is a junior in high school, a son who's in elementary school, and then a two-year-old at home, so I guess I'm going to be involved with education for a long time. But I notice that the involvement with the children as far as what they did academically decreased as they went on in school. My daughter in high school now is fortunate to attend a high school where the principal values parental support and has invited the parents to come in on a regular basis to discuss the programs. He has set up something called a minority scholars program that deals specifically with minority students to encourage them to continue their education. As part of this program, all parents with students involved in this program must attend regular meetings. I found that this has been very rewarding, in that, it let me know the requirements that she was expected to fulfill as a student in high school.

My concern is, when my son goes to middle school next year, that these things will not be followed up as much. I think it is up to the educators to realize that parents are concerned and do feel that they want to be involved in the classroom situation.

Oftentimes parents are intimidated by attending school because they feel they're not welcome. The educational jargon sometimes is a stumbling block, and rather than say "I don't understand" or "would you repeat this", they pretend to understand it and they really don't understand what the teacher is talking about. I think that parents should always feel that they have a right to inquire, and if there is something said that they don't understand, ask to have it spelled out specifically and how this is related to their child.

I think parents are an excellent asset, not only in a physical sense but also in the sense that they can provide other learning that we can't get through books. A child gets to see things from another perspective. We, as educators, must be flexible with our time and meet the needs of the times. Gone are the days when mothers are stay-at-home mothers and can all participate during the regular school hours. There are more working mothers, and their time is important, and their schedules, too. But I have found that if they know in advance they can plan around this, and they will take the time to be involved.

I think as educators we should offer a variety of times: before school, during school, and in the evenings, and other ways that parents might contribute, such as doing things at home, grading papers, typing, and preparing special treats. If parents are given enough notice, they can plan, and they often do.

In the case of field trips, we found that we've had so many parents who want to participate that we've had to have a waiting list and put parents on hold. As a parent, I feel that parent involvement is the number one priority in making children not only enjoy school, but also to be successful.

A study indicated that children spend more time watching TV than they do communicating with their parents or acquiring an education. Dennis Waitley, who is an author that I admire, referred to it as a "seven minute per week syndrome", where parents actually, on an average, spend only seven minutes per child communicating without interruption. I found that a startling statistic. Because of that, I have tried to put forth an effort to spend more than seven minutes per day with my children.

Our success as educators relies on our ability and our sincerity, to convey to parents their importance to us. In the Aesop's fable about the sun and the wind arguing over who was the most powerful and the strongest, the wind said, "See that old man down there? I can make him take off his coat faster than you can." The sun agreed to go behind a cloud while the wind blew up a storm. The harder it blew, the tighter the man clung to his coat. Eventually the wind gave up and the sun came out and smiled kindly on the man. Before long, the old man mopped his brow, pulled off his coat, and strolled on his way. The sun knew the secret. Warmth, friendliness, and a gentle touch are always stronger than force and fury.

If our goal as educators is to work with the whole child, I think we had best do that by including parents in the scheme of things. I think that we should emulate the sun and then continue to shine.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Diane Winters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DIANE G. WINTERS, TEACHER/PARENT, WEISSER PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL SYSTEM, FORT WAYNE, IN

A partnership between parents and the school is the key to opening the "door to success" for our children. It is one of the best ways to help every child reach his or her full potential.

There has been much research into the correlation between parental involvement and student success in school over many years.

In 1986, Dr. Bennett and the Department of Education, published a study entitled "What Works."

This study found, that there is more of a correlation between student success and parental involvement than any other factor, including race, social-economic background, parental educational background, etc.

Too often, parents feel that "going to school" is an invasion of "hallowed ground." They often feel that they have no place or no right in the school environment, unless there is a specific purpose for their visit.

If this is the case - give them specific reasons for coming. Make them feel welcome and necessary. After all, parents are our biggest asset in educational reform.

There are many ways in which parents can be made to feel welcome and necessary in today's schools.

I'd like to share a few ways which have been used successfully in my own classroom over the past years.

Parents and students alike are always currious about "the new teacher" in their coming school year. To acquaint them with "her" - a letter of welcome is sent to each student a week or two prior to the opening of school. Discussion of "how I spent my summer" and excitement about meeting and getting to know them are included. Also included are a list of supplies to begin preparing prior to "the rush".

On the first day of school parents are requested to bring their student to school for a brief "get acquainted" time.

During this session, parents are informed of the plans, expectations, policies, schedule and general curriculum outline for the year.

They are given a packet of material which they are asked to keep for future reference throughout the year.

Included in this packet are a list of activities that are extra-curricular and wide-ranged to hopefully spark an opportunity for several visits/participations throughout the year. These include the following:

ALL ABOUT ME - each student has a "spotlight" week in which they have a bulletin board for display of: pictures, hobbies, special momentos, pets, etc.

* Parents are encouraged to attend school one day during that week to share their job, hobby or any special interests.

The list is included in the packet which shows the assigned weeks for the year. This way parents can plan ahead.

FIELD TRIPS - Parents are given a list of special field trips such as: plays, out of town trips and any cultural event that may top their interest. They're encouraged to go along as chaperones and small group leaders.

SNACK AND CHAT - is an informal meeting time for parents and teacher to get to know one another better in an informal non threatening relaxed setting. We can "compare notes", "let off steam" or just listen to things that happen in the classroom.

These meetings are held for 1 hour on the last Wednesday of: October, January, February, March and May. (These are months when no formal parent conferences are scheduled.)

CLASSROOM HELPERS - Parents are invited to volunteer in the classroom to help tutor students, share talents or grade papers - plan parties on a regular basis.

OTHER SPECIAL ACTIVITIES WHICH INVOLVE PARENTS ON A GRADE LEVEL BASIS ARE:

THE FATHERS' BREAKFAST - Mothers prepare/serve breakfast for male guests (fathers, stepfathers, uncles, granddads, neighbors, etc.) while students prepare a small gift and brief program. (held in November)

MOTHERS' BREAKFAST - Fathers prepare/serve breakfast to mothers (grandmothers, aunts, neighbors, etc) while students prepare a small gift and brief program. (held in May)

NUTRITIONAL TASTING PARTY - Students/Parents supply a dish from one of the basic food groups - all families are invited to taste. (held in December)

Parents chair/plan all of the above events and carry out with teacher and other parental input.

There are frequent notes of communication going home to parents requesting input and participation. It may simply be notes of appreciation or requests for signatures on assignments.

Parents are given my home phone number and the best times to reach me. There are often "GOOD NEWS PHONE CALLS" to them just saying "your child did extremely well in Math", or "Your child was a good citizen when...". These calls often ease the tension especially for apprehensive parents, (if made prior to conferences.)

Parents often are uncomfortable with educational jargon. Teachers and other school personel should be sensitive to this point and clarify the terminology so that parents feel comfortable enough to ask appropriate questions.

Parents should be encouraged to question statements and situations that directly affect their students.

They should not be made to be on the defensive, nor should they feel the teacher is the enemy.

The deeper the understanding of each individual student, the better served they are.

The better the understanding and communication between parents and schools - the brighter the future of education. The brighter the future of education, the brighter the future and quality of life.

Yours in the struggle,

Diane G. Winters

Diane G. Winters
Teacher/Parent
Weisser Park Elementary School
Fort Wayne Community School System
902 Colerick Street
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Mr. COATS. Thank you very much, Diane.
Elaine.

STATEMENT OF ELAINE M. AMERSON, PARENT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Ms. AMERSON. Thank you, Congressman Coats. I am very pleased to be here from the perspective of a parent today. I have a son in the 7th grade and a daughter in the 11th grade.

There is a very interesting looking book that is titled "Nothing Ever Happens." I want to just read a little portion from the front piece of that.

"What did you do in school today?

"Nothing.

"Well, what happened in school today?

"Nothing. The teacher taught. Nothing ever happens."

"Nothing ever happens" is often a cover-up and a copout, indirect communication for "I'm bored." It goes on to suggest here that there is no joint inquiry, no joint planning, no self-determination to achieve individual and group goals. I would like to expand that understanding to include teachers, students, and parents today.

It asks the question, can we create a climate in which we, students, teachers—I would add and parents—alike take responsibility, find out what we want, ask for what we want, and start getting it. I think the answer is a hopeful "yes."

I would summarize very briefly the longer testimony that I have submitted to you because I would like to move to the point to focus on one specific example of how this has worked well here.

I start in all cases with the grassroots level. I think the rubber hits the road at the school, and that is with the principal. I think principals who don't motivate their staff or invite involvement, sometimes lack sensitivity and good interpersonal skills, sometimes create the problems. They see parents as threats rather than resources, and this is tragic. That might come from downtown administrators sometimes, who try the approach of benign neglect or token involvement with parents.

I believe that when decisions are made at the local level parents have the greatest option for input, ownership, and real involvement. We parents must sometimes accept the blame. Many of us do not understand how systems work, how they operate, how and where we might impact them. I would also add that sometimes I think some of us who are single issue parents also are part of the problem, as opposed to part of the solution, because it defeats and even subverts the purpose for those who wish to have their involvement benefit all children.

I would like to move on quickly to identify one specific example of how parental involvement can help with the system. I have spent my time helping children sell candles. I have bought my share of candy and candles and little trinkets—you're smiling. You have, too, I can tell. I don't mind doing that part. But as a parent, what I expect to have happen for me to feel good about involvement with my children is that the time I commit to them and to the schools makes a significant difference and is taken seriously.

This was the case in one involvement I had recently, being invited to participate in a committee called the Middle Schools Improvement Project here in the IPS system. This was an attempt to take a look at middle schools or junior highs here and decide that we need to do something about it and make the effort to have all of us participate, take a good look at this and come out with some recommendations.

I would suggest to you that there are four salient features of this program that made it successful. Number one, the model used had an external funding source and an outside consultant. That consultant was separate both from the funding source and the school corporation. I think this is crucial.

Number two, parents—and I include other community citizens, not specifically a parent who has a child in the system at the moment—parents were integral to the process.

Number three, in the working reality, there was a blurring of distinction among parent, teacher, and administrator on this committee. In fact, it became to not make a difference, which you were in that committee, because everyone worked very hard at the task and the involvement.

Number four, I would suggest that parental involvement was critical in the final analysis.

In the participation on this committee, I found myself involved with all members as an equal participant. We visited schools together as a team; we brought our information back; we gave our report as a team; we struggled together, principals of the schools, other administrators, parents, community citizens alike, looking at the problem very seriously.

What I suppose was significant was that in this case it worked for me. I was not in a parent slot, as I thought others there were not. There were some half-dozen parents, I believe, invited to participate, and about three who were active. Perhaps we should view this as a reasonable response, given the nature and demands on parents.

The competency and independence of the outside consultant must be stressed in assessing the success of the project. When the planning process saw the possibility of being derailed because of considerations outside of the committee itself, there are persons within the system who are not able to intervene. But parents can ask questions and intervene and make a difference. I have seen it happen.

The result of this process is that the stage is set for real and fundamental reform in the middle grades here in IPS. It is, I think, a hopeful sign, an example of how parents and schools, outside persons and resources, can be brought together and work for the benefit of all of our children.

I have made a number of other statements here in the longer written statement. I would like to focus on just one aspect that I think needs to be given specific attention by those of you asking these questions, and that is the middle school child and the middle school program.

I noticed that an emphasis here is on the disadvantaged child. It becomes increasingly significant, I think, at the middle school grades age. Sometimes we have parents who continue to involve in elementary school, and as the children move on up, they either have other children coming on or they just think the kid doesn't need their support as much. So that sometimes becomes a problem.

I know that you will hear some testimony from others in the day, but it may not be as specific as this. I want to identify from materials of Joan Lipsitz and others, several of the developmental needs of young adolescents indicating how schools should respond, and I think this would give a hint of how teachers, parents, principals and administrations can invite that involvement.

The developmental needs of young adolescents. Number one, we need diversity. We need a diversity of teaching styles, methods, materials, a curriculum that has exploratory courses in the middle schools, flexible scheduling and so forth.

Number two, self-exploration and self-definition, a crucial point at this time of development of children.

Number three, meaningful participation in their schools and communities. This is particularly the aspect that the Middle Schools Improvement Project identified as significant if change was to be made and to be meaningful reform. There must be an opportunity for students to feel ownership and belonging and have meaningful participation in their schools, other than just presenting their bodies in class to teachers.

Number four, positive social interaction with peers and adults. It must make a difference to that child. It must make a difference to someone else that that child is or is not in school that day.

Physical activity is number five. Competence and achievement, we must have opportunities for these to be emphasized and to be achieved. Six calls for competence and achievement. Seven, structure and clear limits. While that needs to happen at the schools, it also needs to happen at home, and that's where partnership can also take place. It is a crucial time and I am pleased that you are taking a look at parental involvement.

I would end with a statement by Jefferson, who reminded us that those who expect to be ignorant and free in a democracy expect what never was and never will be. Education is our hope. We must map carefully our destination so that our route and end result is what we hope for and expect as parents, teachers, students, and the community at large.

[Prepared statement of Elaine M. Amerson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ELAINE M. AMERSON, PARENT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

The education of our nation's children is and should be a topic of high priority at this particular time in our history. If indeed our nation is at risk (as suggested by the National Commission on Excellence in Education), the call is for all of us to participate in plotting a prudent course of reform. Public education—and I confess here to a bias: I am a strong advocate for public education; it has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of hope for our future—if it is to be reformed responsibly, needs the best visioning and wisest insights from the whole community, including especially parents. It has been suggested, and well we understand that our schools are a reflection of our society. Schools have been called on to address many needs and expectations that have been thrust upon them—sometimes facing problems of those abandoned by the home, the church or other state agencies. And in the midst of it all, schools often serve as the primary value-givers/goal definers for children. In order to shoulder and successfully discharge their heavy responsibilities schools need to recognize a hidden strength, a missing key, a willing partner in this task: **parents**. Parents can and should be the foundation for the success of schools in meeting the educational needs of **our** children.

From the perspective of a parent (of a son in 7th grade and a daughter in 11th) and one who has been involved in public education for many years, I am most pleased to have this opportunity to share with you some of my concerns about the barriers to real parental involvement as well as those approaches that may result in real improvement in the quality of education for our children. I would begin at the grassroots in both cases.

The "rubber hits the road" at school. The person who has the most influence/control over what happens there is the principal; she or he is **the key** to educational success in a school building day to day. If the attitude toward parents is one which discounts their importance, ability or insight, the link is broken to the home. Some principals see parents as threats rather than resources. Some are "status quo keepers": "Though it's bad here, I'm afraid to change it; at least it's comfortable and I'm in charge." Others lack vision and energy for the leadership task: They don't motivate their staff, nor invite involvement, and sometimes lack sensitivity or good interpersonal skills (even common courtesy). They seem to have missed the courses that explained how the SFP (self-fulfilling prophecy) works: Negative messages reinforce negative attitudes and behaviors, and they wonder why the kids are "so bad."

Part of the problem can be laid to rest in the Central Office with "downtown administrators." Removed one step from the building (and classroom), some of these persons have the same attitude toward parents as the principals (could it be the "trickle-down" theory?!): parents are a nuisance, a problem to be "disposed of" as quickly as possible. When committees include parents, the input they offer is not taken seriously (because after all, they aren't "experts") or is considered as insignificant. Sometimes there is simply **benign neglect** or **token involvement**. There is a lack of sensitivity by some (with regard to conditions at home or work, in scheduling events, opportunities, conferences, etc.). On the other hand, some fear parents and acquiesce to certain "pressure" in order to "keep the lid on."

State and federal authorities do not escape; they pose their own set of barriers to meaningful involvement and the search for excellence. When either body controls the pursestrings (and both do to an extent), the agenda for education is set, or at least boundaries are defined. When decisions are made at the local level, parents have the greatest option for input, ownership, and real involvement. (An aside: It is patently unfair to have outside—or upside—mandates without the corresponding resources to comply.) The result brings on another problem—excessive paperwork requirements (so parents are asked to help "push paper" rather than invited to share skills and ideas). I must also mention a particular point of irritation in this state—the inequity of funding urban corporations which have unique needs and demands, but are penalized by declining enrollment factor in the funding formula. (A friend once said, "Nothing is so unfair as treating unequals as equal.") Finally, the federal government has not adequately assumed the significant role that has been identified for it: 1. Meeting "the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, minority and language minority students, and the handicapped;" 2) "supporting curriculum imporvement and research on teaching, learning, and the management of schools;" 3) identifying "the national interest in education...[helping] fund support efforts to protect and promote that interest." Clearly, these impact on parents and their involvement in the educational task.

A fair consideration of barriers in this process would be incomplete without acknowledging that we as parents must accept some of the blame. Many of us do not understand these systems and how they work, how/where to impact them. We have little or no time (because of work, other children or responsibilities at home, etc.). Some carry unrealistic expectations that school should be "all things to all people." Some of us don't know what to do or how to get help in raising our children; and some give no support at home to the educational pursuits or efforts of our children (we don't even see they get proper food—especially if we are poor—or adequate rest, and where is a quiet place to do homework?). But I would judge most harshly those parents who are "single issue" persons: It defeats, even subverts, the purpose of those who wish their involvement to benefit all children. If all one cares about is whether or not creationism is in the text, or sex is out, or AIDS is not discussed, then society is the poorer because education will be the weaker.

I could not conclude a conversation about barriers without mentioning that this also has a societal dimension. Where there is no job, there is no dignity. When there is underemployment, there is despair. If one is trapped in the welfare syndrome, there seems no way out (consider health care needs, skills requirements, child care contingencies, transportation needs, etc.). Clearly parental involvement is impacted by these—so that addressing these establishes the foundation for participation. Put simply, it is an acknowledgment that this is a complex issue which calls for a multifaceted approach in redress.

So, what **helps**? Obviously, "eliminating the negative and accentuating the positive" is the short answer. But some specificity is no doubt more beneficial!

We need **principals** who are welcoming, who have an attitude of invitation toward parents (and visitors in general). They need to plan places/occasions for parents to "plug-in" in meaningful ways: aiding teachers and students in tutoring; teaching mini-courses; being guest speakers/demonstrators in areas of expertise; co-directing extra curricular activities, etc. They must inspire, encourage, reward teachers for positive parental involvement. They should form/affirm/support/attend PTA meetings. It helps to get to know and call parents by name (as well as students). They need to foster welcoming and positive attitudes and establish an inviting environment—with words, touch, visuals.

Central Office **Administrators** must lower anxiety level about parental involvement—see parents as "co-conspirators" in the fight to win the education excellence game. They need to reward buildings (and personnel) for real parental involvement. (Forget numbers — better a handful of committed parents feeling good about their involvement and have them "infect" others, than 50 "paper parents" who are listed in name only.) Offer in-service opportunities to parents as well as teachers. Engage parents and teachers with themselves in joint PR (public relations) efforts, highlighting the accomplishments of the children. Involve at decision-making levels.

I would like to share with you one specific and significant example of the positive benefits of **real and meaningful parental participation** resulting in fundamental reform. In the IPS school system parents were invited to participate on a Middle Schools Improvement Project committee to help craft a program that would set policy for reform in the middle grades. The salient features of this project were the following: 1. The model used had an external funding source and outside consultant (separate from the funding source and the school corporation). 2. Parents (and other community citizens) were integral to the process. 3. In the working reality there was a blurring of distinction among parent, teacher, administrator. 4. Parent involvement was critical in the final analysis. In the participation on this committee parents (and I include those from the community who were not associated with the school corporation) found themselves to be equal members in addressing fundamental reform—not in a "parent slot." There were some half dozen parents invited to participate and about three who were active; perhaps this should be viewed as a reasonable response, given the nature of demands on parents. The competency and independence of an outside consultant must be stressed in assessing the success of the project. When the planning process saw the possibility of being derailed (because of considerations outside the committee itself), those on the committee who were not in the system could intervene. The result of this process is that the stage is set for real and fundamental reform in the middle grades. It is, I think, a hopeful sign—an example of how parents and schools, outside persons and resources can be brought together and work for the benefit of all our children.

As for the role of **state and federal governments** in educational reform, I would point to the above expression for an example of approaches to support. The four factors mentioned as integral are important if parental involvement is to be meaningful and make a difference. We generally fund what we believe in—where our priorities lie. While new funds are justified and appreciated, I would suggest that we may want to re-order our current priorities. Parents are generally not a highly organized group with well paid lobbyists; we depend on reason and good sense to prevail. If you wish to have some suggestions for re-ordering resources, I am happy to offer the following:

1) Promote "Paper Pushers" at the governmental level to "People Promoters" at the grassroots—schools—level.

2) Redesignate subsidies (actually, "welfare" for corporate interests). For example, take our tax monies which go to tobacco welfare and promote needed reforms in education: Take the Cancer Sticks away and give our children Computer Skills for longer, more productive, more enjoyable lives.

3) Re-prioritize other spending. As an example, build one less Trident and quintuple the commitment in 80 areas of education, including the designated priorities of "gifted and talented students, socio-economically disadvantaged, minority and language minority students, the handicapped" and just plain old average kids—all of whom may have a better chance of reaching their potential and increasing ours as a nation.

Simply put, the federal government must address the mandate of "supporting curriculum improvement and research on teaching, learning, and the management of schools." There must be the call (through incentives) for more than a bland curriculum which is supported by innocuous, low reading level textbooks. There should be support for pilot projects which show what can be done with dynamic principals and teachers, appropriate and challenging materials, commitment and support of business, and meaningful parental involvement. I would add one note as to where to focus at this point: **the middle school child and program**. This is a crucial time of development and a concerted effort needs to be made to see that available information and resources get to the schools.

Finally, **parents** will need to pick our share of the load — helping/inviting/making it possible and desirable for all to involve in this important task of educating the children of our country. As we know what is happening, what is and isn't working, what is and isn't prudent, we can be partners in the venture, calling on the schools—including school boards—to be responsible, reasonable and judicious. We can be the members of the school borads, making them work for all children. What will help us most are those actions, via incentives through support of pilot programs and other means, which will reward those school systems which invite and benefit from meaningful and real parental involvement at a level which makes a difference (for the better) in the quality of educational opportunities and experiences for our children.

Such a task is a challenge which requires participation of the whole community/country. We must all take part in the discussion and search for creative reforms. I suggest that an examination of the current status of public school education indicates that there is much that is good on which to build: For every problem in our schools, we are blessed in a hundred ways with the contributions and gifts of special and caring people—those teachers who spend extra hours of preparation and care for students which goes beyond the call of duty, those special principals and administrators who go about their tasks with sensitivity and competence in ways that set the standards for excellence, the unsung staff members who perform their duties in exceptional ways that affirm and support the children, and those parents who are willing to give of their time to make it work better for all. We are in the debt of these special, gifted and giving persons who are sprinkled throughout our schools in this country.

Where to from here? In taking a look at who we are, what we want, where we want to be, what we are willing to do and what we are willing to pay for, we will find some directions and answers. Our children, graduates of the last decades of the Twientieth Century, must be those who not only know how to run our machines and computers, but those who grasp values of humanity. Education is a big part of the key and our hope; Jefferson reminded us that "Those who expect to be ignorant and free in a democracy, expect what never was and never will be." Let us map carefully our destination so that our route and end result is what we hope for and expect."

Mr. COATS. Thank you very much, Elaine.
Joan Jeter Slay.

STATEMENT OF JOAN JETER SLAY, PARENT, TRAINING COORDINATOR, DESIGNS FOR CHANGE, CHICAGO, IL

Ms. SLAY. I am both a parent of a Chicago public high school sophomore and the Training Coordinator of Designs for Change, an educational research and advocacy organization. My work with Designs for Change is to supervise and coordinate the recruitment, training, and leadership development of poor and minority parents in order to involve them in their childrens' local schools. I will just briefly summarize my written remarks.

First of all, I come from that kind of background, so I feel that I have some credibility in talking about it.

Let me share with you this. There is no poor parent who does not want a better life than theirs for their children. Most poor parents see education as the only bridge to that better life. I have met few parents, poor, minority or otherwise, who did not know that the Chicago public schools were failing to educate their children. What poor parents don't know is what to do about it and how to supplement their child's education when their own skills are limited.

The alienation between parents, community, and the Chicago public school system has never been worse than since this past strike. Let me give you an example of the kind of alienation that occurred daily before this strike.

In one of the lowest achieving schools in Chicago, that means when the average student completes 8th grade, he or she is more than a year and a half behind in reading skills. This school sits in the middle of a large public housing project. I was told by the principal that she wouldn't work with my organization. Not that there was anything wrong with us, but we had involved all the people who had children with problems. "Your parents," she said to me, "are not the parents of the good students. You attract the troublemakers, the people with problems, whose children have problems." I don't think she will ever understand my delighted response of "Thank you, thank you so much."

In this atmosphere of alienation, and sometimes downright hostility, we at Designs for Change have been able to involve hundreds of parents in educational issues. It has been a matter of trial and error. They were not all successes. But we have developed a basic approach that we can use in any urban community. It involves knocking on doors, setting up tables in supermarkets, speaking at social service agency meetings, and going to church and speaking at church services. We hang out in laundrymats, talk to people in currency exchange lines. From meeting people, we move on to build relationships as we train and develop leaders, parent leaders, who can begin to operate independently. It takes about a year, and it is a big investment of time, worth it only because we are empowering people.

And when I say empowering people, I mean the people are leaving us at the end of the year with skills that they cannot only use to become involved in their child's education, but they sometimes go on to become the leaders in the new tenant management movement in public housing. They go back to school. They have begun to realize that they can control their own destinies.

I want to take a look again at my troublemakers in the school in the large public housing project. We worked with those parents for a year. Parents were learning what experiences their children needed to be good readers. They learned what an effective school is, what its characteristics are. They learned to understand the huge bureaucracy in Chicago, 600 schools, 40,000 employees. Parents became comfortable with school finance. Despite all this, the relationship with that particular school went from bad to worse. Now I have parents who swore they would never set foot in the school as long as "that woman" was there. She would never have an opportunity to insult them again. Where, I wondered, would it all end.

At the end of June of last year I was at a loss. We had spent our year, and so what? There was no partnership here. This September I got a call from the parent leader. The group had formed an independent 501(c)(3) organization and received a grant of $5,000 from, of all places, the Chicago Park District, to conduct a read-a-thon. Would we help. Well, of course, we would. So now there are 400 children involved in a worthwhile project that could, however, double its value had the school been willing to allow the parents to work with them.

I could tell you story after story—not all of them successes—but every one proving that there is so much talent, energy, and imagination in these disadvantaged communities. The challenge is to take all this untapped resource and channel it into activities that have a positive impact on their children's education. It is not difficult. It's time-consuming. The key is empowering people. Parents must feel, as another parent has already said this morning, that they make a difference. And then be encouraged and prepared to do so effectively.

Finally, there are just not enough efforts that assist the poor, the minority parent, to be in charge of their own destinies, that encourage people to develop an independence, that educate and inform people to exercise their rights. There are just far too few programs.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Joan Jeter Slay follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN JETER SLAY, PARENT, CHICAGO, IL

My name is Joan Jeter Slay and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you today. My comments are based on my actual experiences as the parent of a Chicago public high school sophomore and as Training Coordinator of Designs for Change, an educational research and advocacy organization. My work with Designs for Change is to supervise and coordinate the recruitment, training, and leadership development of poor and minority parents in order to involve them in their children's local school. These activities have brought me into contact with hundreds of Chicago parents and I am here to share with you some of the insights, successes, and issues of involving the low-income parent in his or her child's education. I feel particularly qualified to speak on this issue because I am the product of a like environment. I grew up in public housing in Chicago, part of a single female head-of-household family, poor, and sometimes on welfare.

First, let me state categorically: there is no poor parent who does not want a better life than theirs for their children. And most poor parents see education as the only bridge to that better life. I have met few parents — poor, minority, or otherwise — who did not know that the Chicago public schools were failing to educate their children. What poor parents don't know is what to do about it and how to supplement their child's education when their own skills are limited.

For years, the Chicago Public Schools have systematically alienated parents. The alienation has been overt. Only recently have the Board members adopted an open door policy. Unfortunately, it is a paper policy. In a system as large as ours, 600 schools, the Board may adopt a policy that becomes practice in few places. Let me give you some examples:

--In a North Side Chicago school, parents gave the principal fliers to announce a meeting of the official state-mandated parent group, called the Local School Improvement Council. The parents asked the principal if the teachers could give these announcements to the children to take home. The principal refused.

--In a South Side school, the official parent group wanted to work to improve discipline in the schools. After six weeks of negotiating with the principal and key teachers, a survey for students, teachers, and parents was agreed on. The teacher union representative then got the teachers to refuse to participate if students were allowed to be surveyed. He said the students might feel they were evaluating the teachers.

--In one of the lowest achieving schools in Chicago, which sits in the middle of a large public housing project, I was told by the principal that she wouldn't work with my organization because we had involved all the people who had children with problems. "Your parents," she said to me, "are not the parents of the good students. You attract the trouble-makers, the people with problems, whose children have problems." I don't think she will ever understand my delighted response of, "Oh, thank you, thank you so very much," and my subsequent compliments to our staff recruiter.

In this atmosphere of alienation and sometimes down-right hostility, we at Designs for Change have been able to involve hundreds of parents in educational issues. Our efforts are focused 65% in the black community in public housing, 20% in the Hispanic community, and 15% in middle-class neighborhoods, both minority and non-minority.

We have developed, by trial and error, a basic approach that can be used in any community. We knock on doors, set up tables in supermarkets, speak at social service agency meetings and at church services. We linger in laundromats; talk to folks in line at currency exchanges. From meeting people, we move on to build relationships as we train and develop leaders who can begin to operate independently. It takes about a year. A big investment of time, but worth it when you realize what we are actually doing is empowering people.

And these parents — what do they do when they are trained? What kinds of impact do concerned, informed, active parents have? I can give you only one example of parent involvement that has been in place long enough to impact test scores. At this Chicago school, the principal has encouraged parent involvement. There are always busy parents in the parent room and the result has been visible in the absence of graffiti and vandalism, exemplary discipline, and rising reading scores. There are many other parent groups who are working toward this, but have only been involved for a year or so. An example:

—Let us look again at my "troublemakers" at the school in the large public housing project. We worked with the parents for a year. Parents were learning what experiences their children needed to be good readers. They learned the ingredients of an effective school. They learned to understand the huge bureaucracy, the Board of Education. Parents became comfortable with school finance. Despite all this, the relationship with the school went from bad to worse. Now, I had parents who swore they would never again set foot in the school as long as "that woman" was there. "She" would never again have an opportunity to insult them again. Where, I wondered, would it all end? At the end of June this year I was at a loss. We had spent our year and so what? This September I got a call from the parent leader, the group had formed an independent 501(c)(3) organization and received a grant of $5,000 from, of all places, the Chicago Park District to conduct a Read-a-Thon. Would Designs for Change help? Of course we would. So now, there are 400 children involved in:

storytelling
listening to stories
reading — whatever they choose
writing stories
drama — creating their own plays
producing a weekly newsletter
a library card drive
supervised trips to the library

This is an after-school volunteer activity supported by the Park District and involving the Chicago Public Library, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and a host of social service agencies and small business owners. Every activity earns a child one lottery ticket. Thus, a poor reader has an equal chance to win. On Christmas Eve over 400 prizes will be raffled off. There is an excitement about reading. Prizes range from a McDonald's gift certificate to a 10-speed bike or a small color television, every prize solicited by dedicated parents and community folk. Over a hundred parents are involved in the reading/discussion groups where they can earn lottery tickets for their children. Parent workshops to assist parents to improve their children's reading are scheduled. All of this, going on right now, is outside the school, coordinated by the poor, disadvantaged "troublemaking" parents who "don't care" about their kid's education. If this school were willing to allow the parents to work with them, there is no limit to what could be accomplished.

I could tell you story after story, not all of them successes, but every one proving that there is a lot of talent, energy and imagination in these "disadvantaged" communities. The challenge is to take all this untapped resource and channel it into activities that have a positive impact on their children's education. We have found this mission not difficult, but very time-consuming.

The key, I believe, is empowering people. The parents must feel they can make a difference and then be encouraged and prepared to do so effectively.

And finally, I would urge you to support efforts — not only in education, but other areas as well — that assist people to be in charge of their own destinies, that encourage people to develop an independence and that educate and inform people to exercise their rights. There are far too few programs with this focus. Thank you.

Mr. **Coats**. Thank you very much, Joan.

We will next hear from Yvonne Chan, the principal of Sylmar Elementary School, Sylmar, CA.

STATEMENT OF YVONNE CHAN, ED.D., PRINCIPAL, SYLMAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SYLMAR, CA

Dr. **Chan**. Good morning, Congressman Coats, and ladies and gentlemen who are present here today. It is a real pleasure for me to have this opportunity to share with you our real positive experiences in working with parents at Sylmar Elementary School in Los Angeles, CA. We have about 910 students, kindergarten through sixth grade, and I am a "rookie" principal. This is my second year. We are definitely an ethnically changing school, community, predominantly Hispanic and black.

Last spring, as I was assigned to Sylmar Elementary, the staff and I and, at that time, very few parents, maybe about three white parents, we were discussing how we were going to get parent involvement. We identified a number of barriers, and these are the barriers, definitely the language and cultural differences, communication problems—that means the staff and the parents are often not on the same wave length. Feelings of inferiority, reluctance to participate on the part of the parents, and, of course, you have the famous ones—the lack of time, the lack of interest, transportation, babysitting problems.

Now, how do we go about solving—and we are still in the process of solving these problems. We identify four major effort areas and we target our effort in these four areas. The first one has to do with just bringing the parents into our school. Now, how do we do that. We turned an old storage room into a parent/child center. We painted, the parents and I and the kids, we cleaned; we put up murals; we put up signs; we put together whatever available old furniture we had. This is an informal place for the parents. In fact, this place was once upon a time called "flushing meadows." It's next to the bathroom. All you hear is the bathroom flushing. But now it is a really nice, warm, cozy place.

Meanwhile, I encouraged the staff and I myself to learn all the parents names as much as we can. Every morning, as the parents drop off their kids or pick them up, we greeted them. My Spanish is not terrific, but I struggled and we learned together. I may speak with a little Chinese accent, but all of us are going to do it.

We did a lot of parent-to-parent, person-to-person invitations for school functions—home delivery, if I have to. And we have visits. We have a low income housing project very close to our school, feeding in close to 35 percent of the kids. Some people ask why I go there. I say, if my kids live there, why couldn't I go there? So I go there about three times a week. My teachers will be on release time, where I sub for them, where we release them as teacher ambassadors to the various housing projects and the various apartment houses.

Meanwhile, we discovered another secret that really worked well. We work very closely with apartment managers as well as housing project managers, or identifying a block parent—someone like many of the ladies here—geographically, who will help to set up networks.

Now, the community helps, too. We have these fast food services, Pizza Hut, Shakey's, McDonald's. What they do is they host family nights for us, where the parents invite other parents. Very often we have the white parents inviting the Hispanic parents, and the black parents inviting Hispanic parents. The staff and I will actually work back there and serve. We cook and do everything possible to bring the parents in. When they come in, we recognize them and give them an incentive for their attendance.

Now, the second type of effort is aimed at providing them with parent education. Now we get the parents in and we have to work with them in terms of communication and various expectations. In addition to the normal traditional workshops that we have on site at Sylmar Elementary, we actually have workshops on a monthly basis in the project housing. There is a little rec room that we clean out and we do it there, at a time that is convenient for the parents. They're parents and they're our responsibility. We conduct service at the family home ground, at their convenience.

Topics include antidrug prevention, the importance of attendance, postsecondary opportunities, and one that seems to go well is how to train kids in self-help and security at home as well as in the neighborhood when no adult is there to supervise.

Now, beginning in January at Sylmar, twice a week, we will be having a part ESL class and amnesty classes. There is a professional parent library where we stock resources for parents. At this time the babysitting and transportation problems are quite secondary. The car pooling, as well as rotating parents who help each other, and using after school staff help, took care of that very easily.

The third type of effort now really involves the parents in the actual working of schools, beyond the bake sale type. We team ethnic groups together. I have to admit that we have had problems before with a small group of white parents who were the majority geographically at that school before that time. Now we pair them up in resolving common concerns. Not concerns along ethnic lines, but common concerns such as together we chopped off a hazardous barricade in front of the school. We work on safety. We coax them to write to Congressmen and Senators, and working on antidrug programs, all their common concerns.

We are now in the process of helping the parents and working with students to put together a Family Focus newsletter highlighting certain families each month, in English and Spanish—sometimes I bring in some Chinese, too. Also, we welcome new families, highlighting new families, put their names up, and also parent role models. We write in this newsletter what works for them.

Now, parents are not being asked to just come and help. We have very specific jobs that the parents would like to do. Whether it is within the classroom, whether it's clerical, whether its extracurricular, things have to be very specific and not to just come and help. Definitely, awards and recognition for the parents. They come in and we take their pictures. We present them with a certificate along with their child.

Now, the last final type of effort, the fourth one, is definitely staff in service. There are two major areas. One is training for the mastery of skills in working with parents, such as how to conduct productive parent conferences and how to do follow up, how to make negative reports a positive display of concern and commitment to help.

How to start, and just not starting but to maintain ongoing communication with parents. On the other hand, because we're in Los Angeles, CA, it is the second language aquisition skills for the staff. We have language classes on site, a summer study group. A personally have escorted my staff to Mexico. We have complimentary enrollment, free of charge, at the UCLA extension to learn languages. We are putting together a booklet with common phrases in Spanish and accompanying tapes for the staff, and we do pair a bilingual teacher with a monolingual teacher so that they can have support in terms of parent communication.

Now, finally, you ask me did our efforts pay off. You bet. They paid off in three ways. The first one is student related. Our test score, according to CAP, the California Achievement Program, for the primary grades have gone up eight percent across the board, while other school districts are going down five percent. Attendance has gone up eight percent. The desire for higher education on the part of our kids, especially the sixth graders, has gone up significantly, double. And then one indirect one, that we notice we have less kids going home without adult supervision, because the parents do network and help each other.

Now, parent related, on how all of this effort paid off. Definitely, the different ethnic groups are working together. A don't have a group coming to me and insisting that they would like to check the head lice of one group. I don't have one group telling me our test scores are going down because of the other group. Of course, our minority parents are taking leadership roles. Some of them may not be able to write in either language, but we coach them and we help them. We send them to meetings and they are able to stand up now to give oral and written reports, make professional decisions and commitments.

We have single working mothers networking together to help each other pick up kids. They set high expectations for their kids and all the parents are reading the school bulletins. They actually have written notes back to us, whether it be positive or suggestions for improvements, but they are writing to us.

Lastly, in terms of staff and school related, we have more volunteers to help, more visitors, less stressful teachers, more teachers willing to speak another language, and more sensitive to the needs of this new population. We go out of our way to look for social services for our kids—shoes, dental work. Definitely, our teachers are spending a lot more time with formal one-on-one parents conferencing, or informal home visits or phone calls.

Last of all, how much does all of this cost? At this point, $1,800, if you want the dollar figures. But what it costs also is human effort, tons and tons of caring and commitment from both sides.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Yvonne Chan follows:]

Prepared Statement of Yvonne Chan, Principal, Sylmar Elementary School, Sylmar, CA

It is my pleasure to have this opportunity to share with you and your Committee the barriers we faced and solutions we used to bring about meaningful parent involvement in our ethnically changing school community which is now predominantly hispanic.

Early last spring, we have identified the following barriers that hindered active parent involvement:

1. Language and/or cultural differences
2. Communication problems (ie. not understanding school jargons, not getting on the same wavelength with school staff, feeling unwelcome)
3. Feelings of inferiority / reluctance to participate
4. Lack of understanding of the "educational system"
5. Lack of time
6. Lack of interest
7. Transportation problem
8. Babysitting problem

With the assistance of the Hispanic Policy Development Project and a $5,000 grant from Readers' Digest last March, we have implemented and are in the process of implementing the following activities aimed at eliminating these barriers.

BRINGING PARENTS INTO OUR SCHOOL:

1. Setting up a Parent-child Satellite within our school campus (a small room where parents may gather).

2. Establishing an ongoing parent bulletin board (English/Spanish) near school gate for parents to post information and exchange ideas.

3. Making special home delivery of meeting/activity information.

4. Conducting home visits by the principal.

5. Sending teachers as community ambassadors visiting families.

6. Dividing the neighborhood into blocks utilizing computerized data; selecting and training block parents or apartment managers responsible to set up block network.

7. Requesting local food services (eg. McDonald's, Shakey's Pizza) to host family nights with school staff serving parents.

8. Holding Parent-Student Recognition Ceremonies in which pairs of parent-student are acknowledged with awards and family photos, eg. Citizens of the Month, Anti-drug Campaign, Science Fair, etc.

9. Offering attendance incentives for parent attendance at school functions.

10. Training a student host/hostess group to bring parents in.

11. Having a white parent invite a hispanic parent to a school function.

12. Helping parents locate community resources, eg. medical, legal, housing, social, and recreational.

13. Providing an amnesty class two days per week and an adult ESL class two days per week.

14. Increasing the presence of minority adult role models at school by hiring minority teachers and assistants, recruiting senior citizen volunteers, using high school tutors.

15. Posting signs and sending out bilingual flyers in the neighborhood.

16. Learning the names of parents who drop off/pick up their children each day and greeting these parents by the principal and school staff.

PROVIDING PARENT EDUCATION:

1. Holding parent meetings and workshops in the evening at the neighborhood housing project in which 26% of our families reside. Topics involve drug prevention, health, school attendance, post-secondary opportunities.

2. Providing parent training on how to solve latchkey problem, eg. forming neighborhood helpline, helping children develop self-care and safety at home when no adult is present, communicating with school when crisis occurs.

3. Maintaining a parent professional library that houses current books/articles, resource materials for home learning.

4. Conducting make and take workshops on home learning centers.

5. Providing parent role models on effective parenting techniques by utilizing parents as workshop leaders.

6. Providing babysitting by using afterschool playground workers, preschool staff, retired teacher volunteers, and nearby high school students.

7. Providing transportation by forming carpools, picking up and taking parents home by school staff.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN SOME PART OF THE WORKING OF THE SCHOOL:

1. Developing The Family Focus newsletter, prepared by parents and students, highlighting a few families each month.

2. Orchestrating teamwork among white, black, and hispanic parents that aims at resolving common concerns, eg. student safety campaign, neighborhood traffic problem, anti-drug effort.

3. Extending person to person invitation by teachers/principal to parents asking parents to be involved in special school activities.

4. Providing specific jobs by which parents can make contributions, eg. notify school of truancy problem, speak to other parents on drop-out prevention, pick up and care for neighborhood children of single-working-mothers, design bilingual flyers.

5. Drawing upon parents with special skills to demonstrate or teach in classrooms and to assist with various school functions.

6. Inviting parents to visit classes as supportive partners.

7. Presenting awards furnished by local businesses to parents, eg. special recognition, perfect attendance.

SERVICES TO STAFF

1. Conducting inservice training on knowledge and skills related to positive home-school communication.

2. Providing techniques on how to conduct productive parent conferences and do follow-ups (an extra phone was installed for parent contact purpose).

3. Setting up ways to initiate and maintain parent contacts (eg. develop a personal schedule of contacts so that every parent hears something positive each month, using teacher-parent contracts).

4. Providing second language acquisition classes for teachers and other staff, and opportunities to utilize bilingual skills.

5. Compiling a small notebook for staff with common Spanish phrases needed to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents.

6. Forming a summer study group to Mexico to acquire Spanish skills through intensive daily instruction.

7. Pairing a bilingual teacher with a monolinugal teacher in instructional as well as in noninstructional responsibilities.

8. Offering complimentary enrollment in language classes at nearby university.

9. Coaching teachers on planning and implementing classroom-based ongoing parent involvement activities.

10. Providing teachers with resource materials focusing on home-school communication, needs of immigrant children, motivation and maintenance of high-risk youths, and other major issues related to the changing school population.

Thus far, we're experiencing many positive effects correlated to our parent involvement efforts. Analysis of our school records, parent feedback, staff interviews, student achievement data revealed the following postive changes :

1. Student-related
    a. Reading and math test scores have increased by 8 points on an average in the primary grades. (California Achievement Program)
    b. Attendance/drop-out rate has reduced from 12% to 5.5%.
    c. Less students were left home without adult supervision.
    d. Desire for higher education was expressed by students.

2. Parent-related
    a. More parents read bulletins sent home and wrote notes to teachers.
    b. Higher academic expectation for their children was expressed.
    c. Parents of different ethnic groups have been willing to work together on common concerns.
    d. A single-working-mother support system was developed.
    e. Participation of parents at various school functions increased by 200%.
    f. More parents responded to invitations, recruitment of volunteers by completing and returning requested "tear-offs".
    g. The number of parent visitors (ie. parents who felt comfortable to just drop by to see the principal and/or teachers) doubled.
    h. Hispanic parents have taken on leadership roles alongside with white parents in various school site councils. Hispanic parents are no longer reluctant to attend region-wide meetings, present oral and written reports, give input to major decisions.
    i. 28% of our non-English speaking parents are now learning English.

3. School-related
    a. Staff has become more sensitive toward the needs of our changing student and parent population (eg. less referrals of hispanic bilingual students to special education and to principal for discipline).
    b. Teachers spent more time on parent conferences.
    c. Staff has been more willing to take on some social service responsibilities in addition to providing academic training to children, eg. help parents obtain community resources, medical information.
    d. The number of Spanish-speaking teachers doubled.

Thank you for your invitation to this important hearing. Should you need further information, please contact me at (818) 367-1078.

Sincerely,

Y. Chan
YVONNE CHAN, ED.D.
Principal

Mr. COATS. Thank you very much, Yvonne.

Our last presenter on this first panel is Mildred Winter, who is Director of Parents as Teachers for the University of Missouri. Mildred, thank you for coming. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF MILDRED WINTER, DIRECTOR, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, ST. LOUIS, MO

Ms. WINTER. I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about Parents as Teachers as it relates to the topic of the hearing.

The Parents as Teachers concept represents parent involvement at its best because it begins at the onset of the child's learning at birth, and it begins in the home on the parents' turf. It sets the tone for a positive home/school partnership.

Its primary goal is to give all children the best possible beginning, laying the foundation for school and life success. The teachers, of course, are the parents, supported by professional educators who provide them the tools they need to effectively teach and nurture their young children.

As a former kindergarten teacher, I experienced all too often the frustration of trying to reverse the effects of a starved early environment provided by parents who mistakenly believed that the child's education would begin when he entered the formal school program.

Parents as Teachers began in 1981 as a pilot project, cooperatively developed by the Missouri Department of Education and four local school districts. It is now offered in all of Missouri's 543 school districts. We currently serve 53,000 families who have children under age 3 under state and local funding. Our program is based on the research evidence that the first years of life are critical in terms of the development of language, intellectual abilities, and emotional well-being and that parents play a key role during these years in determining what the child will ultimately become.

Through regularly scheduled home visits and group meetings, parents receive educational guidance on what to expect at each stage of development from birth to age 3; how to handle difficult situations, and how to make the most of their time with their children, thus increasing parents' confidence and pleasure in childrearing. The child's progress is carefully monitored by both parent and professional educator to detect and treat early any emerging problems. Parents are helped to access any needed services that the program itself cannot provide.

Parent educators are women and men who are parents themselves who have backgrounds in early childhood education or development, nursing or social work, and who have been trained by professional staff who were involved in our pilot study. They work flexible hours and schedule their services around the needs of families so that dads as well as moms can participate.

Unlike many efforts that address the problems of under-achievement and school failure, Parents as Teachers is a nontargeted early prevention program. We find that the need for support and assistance in the parenting role crosses all socio-economic and educational levels, and we find also that high risk families are attracted to the program because it is open to everyone. Thus, it does not imply inadequacy on their part or view them as bad parents. It is a program for winners and everyone wants to belong. The special needs of families who have multiple problems are met through intensified services to those families.

Although this program is delivered by the public schools, it has been a public/private partnership from the outset. Its widespread support across agencies can be attributed to the many benefits that it offers. Health care providers see it as improving childrens' physical well-being through the ongoing screening. Mental health, social services, and corrections view it as preventing and reducing child abuse and neglect. Churches endorse it as strengthening family life. Business sees the potential for reducing stress and improving the quality of life for their employees. Schools, of course, realize the benefits of reducing the need for special and remedial education and of forming a positive relationship with families from early on.

Missouri is a conservative state by nature. However, our Governor and legislature realized the savings in human potential and tax dollars that can result from this low-cost program and elected to make it mandatory on the part of school districts, voluntary, of course, on the part of parents. They have steadily increased funding each year since 1985 to allow for a manageable growth.

What success stories do we have to tell? In 1985, there was an independent evaluation made of the pilot project, and the results were impressive. In testing a randomly-selected sample of project children at age 3 against a carefully-matched comparison group, project children were found to be significantly more advanced in language development, in problem solving and other intellectual abilities, as well as in social competence.

These findings we know have a direct implication for later school success, since research tells us that a child's school readiness at age 5 or 6 can be predicted at age 3, with few exceptions.

Expanding the program state-wide from four model programs has challenged us to demonstrate its effectiveness in our inner cities, in migrant communities, and with the rural poor throughout the state. So now we have some new success stories to tell, such as a school district reducing its dropout rate to zero for adolescent parents and expectant parents, through this program. A group of Ozark Mountain parents going to the school and saying to the administrators "We don't know how to talk right to our children; we want someone to teach us correct English so we can be better teachers of our children." Toddlers of mentally retarded mothers developing on target because parent educators gear the program to the parents' level of understanding and help them deal with small steps at a time.

An 18-year-old mother of two, abandoned by her family, and mandated by the court to participate in the program because of child abuse, a year later learning to cope with her two young children, recruiting other teens into the program, and well on her way to obtaining her GED.

The transferability of Parents as Teachers to other states has already been demonstrated. Professionals from 26 other states, including Indiana, have come to Missouri to look at our model at work and to be trained in its implementation, so we see selected school districts in 13 states already having implemented the program and 13 others well on their way, using funds such as Chapter 2, child abuse prevention funds, linking up with private money, linking up with the YMCA and other community agencies, mental health associations and others that are interested in the well-being of young children.

I firmly believe that without a better beginning than we have traditionally provided our youngest children, the long-term benefits of school reform may well elude us. We know full well that underachievement and school dropout begins in the cradle—at least it begins at the age of seven or eight months, when children begin to explore their environment and develop the basic skills of learning how to learn. The mounting national interest in our program suggests that others share our conviction that empowering parents as first teachers is one of the wisest investments we can make to improve our schools.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mildred Winter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MILDRED WINTER, DIRECTOR OF PARENTS AS TEACHERS, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, SAINT LOUIS, MO

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members and guests, I am Mildred Winter, the Director of the Missouri Parents as Teachers Program. I am pleased to be here today to describe the Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program and its relationship to the hearing topic, "Parents: The Missing Link in Educational Reform."

It was Plato who said, "The beginning is half of the whole." A father of a two-year-old in rural Missouri puts it more plainly: "A lot of parents just more or less take care of their kids until they go to school. They expect the teachers to teach them. But while our children are at home, we are their teachers at a time when they are learning the most the fastest."

Few would argue the fact that all formal education is influenced by the learning experiences of the first years of life. Although most parents want the best for their children, few are adequately prepared for their roles as their child's first teachers.

In Missouri, we have taken the position that the public school's interest in and concern for children's education begins at the onset of learning. The role of the school during the beginning years, however, should be to assist parents with their teaching and nurturing responsibilities and to strengthen the family unit -- not to replace parents as primary teachers and caregivers. Parents as Teachers is parent involvement at its best, because it begins in the home and sets the tone for a positive home/school partnership.

Missouri's Parents as Teachers Program represents a unique partnership between families and schools. Its primary goal is to give all children the best possible beginning, laying the foundation for school and life success. The teachers are the parents, supported by professional educators who provide them the tools they need to effectively teach and nurture their young children. Parents as Teachers is designed to serve all parents -- from single teenage parents to two-parent, well-educated families. Experience has shown that parents want to be good parents and welcome the kind of support Parents as Teachers offers.

The program began in 1981 as a four-year pilot study in four school districts and is now offered in all of Missouri's 543 school districts. We currently serve 53,000 families who have children under age three, and expect to increase the enrollment by five percent each succeeding year. Our program is based on research evidence that the first years of life are critical in terms of the development of language, intellectual abilities, and emotional well-being and that parents play a key role during these years in determining what the child will become.

The pilot study was a cooperative effort of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, The Danforth Foundation and four local school districts representing urban, suburban, and rural communities. Some 380 families who were about to have their first child and who represented a cross section of socioeconomic status, age, and family configurations were enrolled.

Through regularly scheduled home visits by trained parent educators, parents received information on: what to expect at each phase of development from birth to age 3; how to encourage language and thinking abilities through everyday experiences; how to make and choose toys that stimulate curiosity and creativity; how to foster social development; and how to discipline without punishing.

Group meetings with other parents provided opportunities to gain new insights, as well as to share concerns and successes in parenting. Children's progress was monitored by parents and educators to detect/treat any emerging problems which might interfere with learning. Parents were helped to obtain needed services not provided directly by the program.

The results of an independent evaluation of the Parents as Teachers pilot project furnished strong support for the belief that providing high quality, highly interactive educational support to parents during the formative first years of a child's life directly impacts on a child's ability to age three. Specifically, at age three, children in the project: (1) were significantly more advanced in language development than their peers; (2) had made greater strides in problem solving and other intellectual skills; (3) were further along in social development. All these competencies are predictive of and essential to later school achievement. Parent satisfaction with the program was nearly 100 percent.

Key findings indicate PAT children demonstrated advanced intellectual and language development. In contrast with the comparison group and national norms, PAT children consistently scored significantly higher on all measures of intelligence, achievement, auditory comprehension, verbal ability, and language ability. The PAT children ranked at the 75th percentile in mental processing and at the 85th percentile in school-related achievement, in contrast with the comparison group which scored at the 55th and 61st percentiles, respectively. After adjusting for preexisting differences between groups, PAT children continued to significantly outperform comparison children on all measures. It should be noted that 18 additional PAT children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds were added to the sample of 75 PAT children, and these children still maintained significant differences.

The evaluation showed that PAT children demonstrated significantly more aspects of positive social development than did comparison children. PAT children were more frequently reported by their parents as being able to distinguish a self-identity, to have positive relations with adults, and to demonstrate coping capabilities.

In addition, PAT parents were more knowledgeable about child-rearing practices and child development than were comparison parents. PAT parents were significantly more knowledgeable than comparison-group parents about the importance of physical stimuli in the child's environment, about constructive discipline, and about the developmental stages of children from birth to age three. No systematic relationships were revealed between any family background characteristics and PAT parents' knowledge.

The evaluation found that traditional characteristics of "risk" were not related to a child's development at age three. Traditional measures of "risk" (parents' age and education, income, single-parent families, number of younger siblings, and the amount of alternate care received) bore little or no relationship to measures of intelligence, achievement, and language development. PAT parents and children performed well, regardless of socioeconomic disadvantages and other traditional risk factors.

Rather than using traditional measures of risk, parent educators identified other factors such as family stress and poor quality of parent-child interaction which affected a child's achievement. These assessments were significantly and consistently related to all tested outcomes. Children who were assessed as, and remained, at risk performed more poorly on all measures of intelligence, achievement, and language development.

The PAT staff identified one-fourth of the participating children as potentially at risk at some point during the three-year project. In these cases, PAT staff typically intervened by recommending that parents seek medical assistance or other specialized services. By age three, more than one-half of these risk conditions were reported corrected or improved. Parents' responses to the exit questionnaire showed that, of those referred for medical or other special services, 95 percent reported receiving adequate help.

A further key finding was that PAT participation positively influenced parent's perceptions of school districts. Participating parents were more likely to regard their school districts as responsive to their children's needs than were parents of comparison group children; 53 percent of PAT parents rated their district as "very responsible," versus 29 percent of comparison group parents.

Finally, PAT parents had positive feelings about the program's usefulness. Ninety-nine percent of the responding PAT parents reported a high degree of satisfaction with all project services (group meetings, private home visits, screenings). Home visits were identified as the most valuable services. Ninety-seven percent of the parents felt that project services made a difference in the way they perceived their parenting role.

Based on the success of the pilot project, the program has made significant growth in only three years and is now being offered in all of Missouri's eligible public school districts, with support of state and local funding. The Early Childhood Development Act, passed by the Missouri Legislature in 1984, authorized state funding for the first time to support parent education services (birth-4) and child screening (1-4) in all local school districts. The services are mandatory on the part of school districts and voluntary on the part of parents. Enactment of the law was a priority of the State Board of Education, the governor, key legislators and influential community leaders.

The first state funds for PAT were appropriated during 1985-86, and the program has expanded steadily since then. The state provides local school districts a base payment of $150 for each family that participates in an approved PAT program, plus $15 per child for developmental screening. Additional reimbursement is available for hard-to-reach families and those with more than one child under three.

During the first year, appropriations allowed for 10 percent of eligible families (those with children under three) to receive PAT services. The program has expanded gradually each year, and 30 percent of eligible families are expected to take part during 1987-88. Many districts voluntarily enroll more than their state-funded quota of families.

During 1987-88, for the first time, funds are being provided to support supplemental parent education for 50 percent of the families with three- and four-year-olds and for screening 50 percent of three- and four-year-old children.

Since 1985, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has trained and certificated nearly 1,500 parent educators to provide PAT services. Parent educators are women and men who have backgrounds in early childhood education/development, nursing, or social work and who have been trained by professional staff in the PAT model. To maintain program quality, the State Board of Education sets specific standards for parent educators and for local program operations. A comprehensive program of regional inservice training and on-site coaching also is provided by the Department.

Widespread interest in the PAT program is illustrated by the thousands of inquiries that have come from around the world and by the number of people from other states who have come to Missouri to be trained in this model. To date, 67 professionals from 25 states have come to Missouri for training in the PAT model, and programs have already been implemented in 12 of these states.

Extensive media coverage and awards have increased the program's national visibility, with interest growing by leaps and bounds. This, together with the number and scope of requests for information, consultation, and training, suggested to those involved closely with PAT the appropriateness of developing a center for national dissemination and program expansion. Early in 1987, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established "Parents as Teachers National Center" to provide information about PAT, plus training and technical assistance for those interested in adopting the program. The Parents as Teachers National Center is currently located on the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus.

A National Advisory Board, appointed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, lends direction and support to the Center. The board includes leading educators and child development specialists from the across the nation.

Another independent assessment of the program's effectiveness resulted in the Parents as Teachers Program receiving the prestigious Innovations in State and Local Government Award from the Ford Foundation and John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. PAT was the only public school program to receive one of the ten 1987 awards. Recently the program was highlighted at the National Invitational Conference, "Investing in the Beginning," sponsored by the Education Commission of the States.

Statewide expansion has challenged us to demonstrate the program's effectiveness in our inner cities, in migrant communities, and with the rural poor throughout the state. Our success can be best documented through examples such as:

- A school district reducing its dropout rate to zero for adolescent parents and expectant parents through this program.
- A group of Ozark Mountain parents asking the school to teach them correct English so they can better teach their children.
- Toddlers of mentally retarded mothers developing on target because parent educators gear the program to parents' level of understanding.

- Inner city homeless families living in shelters being helped to attend appropriately to their children's developmental needs despite the many stresses they are experiencing.

- A child of a migrant family living in extreme poverty discovering sounds for the first time through a hearing aid for a previously undetected hearing loss of such severity that he was virtually without language.

- A teen mother referred to PAT because of child abuse learning to cope, completing her GED and recruiting other teen mothers into the PAT program.

- A family of eight with three children in a state school for mentally retarded reporting that the parent educator was the first person to ever say anything positive about her children.

Although delivered by the public schools, PAT has been a public/private partnership from the outset. Its widespread support can be attributed to its many benefits. Health care providers see it as improving children's physical well-being. Mental health, Social Services, and Corrections view it as preventing and reducing abuse and neglect. Churches endorse it as strengthening family life. Business sees its potential for reducing the need for special and remedial education and of forming a positive relationship with families from early on. Missouri is a conservative state, however, the Governor and legislature realized the savings in human potential and tax dollars that can result from this low cost program and elected to make it mandatory on the part of school districts. They have steadily increased funding each year since 1985 to allow for manageable growth.

Unlike many efforts that address the problems of under-achievement and school failure, PAT is a non-targeted early prevention program. The need for support and assistance in the parenting role crosses all socioeconomic and educational levels. We find that high-risk families are attracted to the program because it is open to everyone and thus does not imply inadequacy on their part or view them as bad parents. Their special needs are met through intensified service.

William Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education, stated in First Lessons: The 1986 Report on Elementary Education, "Parents belong at the center of a young child's education. The single best way to improve elementary education is to strengthen parents' role in it, both by reinforcing their relationship with the school and by helping and encouraging them in their own critical job of teaching the young. Not all teachers are parents, but all parents are teachers."

I firmly believe that without a better beginning than we have traditionally provided our youngest citizens, the long-term benefits of school reform may elude us. The mounting international interest in our program suggests that others share our conviction that empowering parents as first teachers is one of the wisest investments we can make to improve our schools.

For further information about Missouri's Parents as Teachers Program contact Mildred Winter, Director, Parents as Teachers National Center, Marillac Hall, UM-St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499, (314) 553-5738.

OCTOBER 1985

EXECUTIVE EVALUATION SUMMARY

New Parents as Teachers Project

Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Arthur L. Mallory, Commissioner of Education

The New Parents as Teachers Project (NPAT) was initiated in 1981 to demonstrate the value of early, high-quality parent education. The project provided training and support services which would enable parents to enhance their children's intellectual, language, physical and social development from birth to age three.

A statewide "Conference for Decision Makers" in 1981 provided the impetus for the NPAT project. Under the leadership of Commissioner of Education Arthur L. Mallory and the Missouri State Board of Education, the conference provided a forum for educators, legislators and private-sector leaders to discuss issues related to early childhood/parent education. Research evidence presented at the conference by Dr. Burton White emphasized that learning experiences during the first three years of life are too consequential to be ignored by schools and families.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in cooperation with The Danforth Foundation of St. Louis, organized and implemented the NPAT project in four local school districts—Farmington, Ferguson-Florissant, Francis Howell and Independence. Selected by the Department on the basis of competitive proposals, the four districts represented urban, suburban and rural communities.

The Department awarded each district $30,000 for four years to support NPAT services and curriculum development. Each district contributed additional resources. The Danforth Foundation granted funds for consultation and staff-training services provided by Burton White.

Personnel at each NPAT site included a school administrator, two full-time parent educators, and a part-time secretary. Parent educators planned and conducted private visits and group meetings with parents, and also monitored children's progress. All parent educators were trained in child development and parent education. Some were certificated teachers; all were parents.

A state supervisory committee guided the overall project. At the four sites, NPAT staff also organized local advisory committees which included health care and social service professionals as well as representatives of civic and religious organizations. The advisory committees cultivated community awareness, involvement and support for the project.

NPAT SERVICES

A total of 380 families who were expecting first children between December 1981 and September 1982 were recruited to participate in NPAT. Particular care was taken to assure that all socioeconomic strata, parental ages and family configurations were represented. Beginning in the third trimester of pregnancy and continuing until children reached age three, NPAT participants received the following services:

- Timely, practical information and guidance in fostering the child's language, cognitive, social, and motor development. This information was organized according to the seven phases of development from birth to three years, outlined by Burton White in his book, *The First Three Years of Life*.
- Periodic screening of the child's educational, hearing, and visual development.
- Monthly private visits in the home by parent educators.
- Monthly group meetings for parents with similarly aged children. Group meetings were held at "Parent Resource Centers" located in school buildings.

EVALUATION METHODS

Under contract with the Missouri Department of Education, Research and Training Associates (Overland Park, Kansas) conducted an independent evaluation of the NPAT project. The program's effectiveness was determined by a treatment/comparison group design, using posttests of children's abilities and assessments of parents' knowledge and perceptions. Evaluators randomly selected 75 project children and, from the same communities, 75 comparison children whose parents had not received NPAT services.

Traditional ANCOVA and LISREL analyses of covariance were used to adjust for differences between the two samples, although the groups were surprisingly similar. All children were evaluated within two weeks of their third birthday at sites equally unfamiliar to the treatment and comparison groups. The examiners did not know if individual children were project participants or comparison group members.

To determine children's cognitive levels, evaluators used the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC), which measures intelligence

◇ NPAT children demonstrated advanced intellectual and language development.

In contrast with the comparison group and national norms, **NPAT children consistently scored significantly higher* on all measures of intelligence, achievement, auditory comprehension, verbal ability, and language ability.** The NPAT children ranked at the 75th percentile in mental processing and at the 85th percentile in school-related achievement, in contrast with the comparison group which scored at the 55th and 61st percentiles, respectively. After adjusting for preexisting differences between groups, NPAT children continued to significantly outperform comparison children on all measures. Even when 18 additional NPAT children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds were added to the sample of 75 NPAT children, these children still maintained significant differences.

◇ NPAT children demonstrated significantly more aspects of positive social development than did comparison children.

NPAT children were more frequently reported by their parents as being able to distinguish a self-identity, to have positive relations with adults, and to demonstrate coping capabilities.

**Probability levels for statistical significance are commonly accepted at the .05 level. Most findings for this study were found to be significant at less than the .001 level. There is less than a one-in-a-thousand probability that differences between NPAT and comparison groups were due to chance.*

and achievement of children from 2.5 to 12.5 years of age. Intelligence, as measured by the KABC, is defined in terms of an individual's style of problem solving and information processing. The "Achievement Scale" portion measures verbal intelligence and other school-related skills. Zimmerman's Preschool Language Scale (PLS) was selected to assess the children's understanding and use of language.

Parents judged their children's social development by using a self-administered assessment containing selected and adapted items from the "personal-social" domain of the Battelle Developmental Inventory. In addition, at the time of evaluation, psychometrists rated selected aspects of the children's social development.

A self-administered Parent Knowledge Questionnaire, developed by the NPAT project staff, was given to all parents in order to determine their understanding of child development and appropriate child-rearing practices. When the children were evaluated, all parents were questioned about their perceptions of the responsiveness of their school districts. Finally, NPAT parents were mailed a Third-Year Exit Questionnaire to evaluate their perceptions of the program's usefulness.

STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

The Early Childhood Development Act of 1984 authorizes funding to Missouri school districts for preschool screening, parent education, and programs for preschoolers with developmental delays. Senator Harry Wiggins of Kansas City was prime sponsor of the bill. The governor, members of his staff and members of the legislature also worked actively for the bill's passage. The 83rd General Assembly has appropriated funds for school districts to offer voluntary Parents as Teachers services, beginning with the 1985-86 school year, for families with children under the age of three. All public school districts in Missouri are expected to participate in the program.

The Department and the Commissioner's Committee on Parents as Teachers—a group of influential Missouri citizens who are working with state education officials to promote parental involvement in education—are cooperatively providing a comprehensive training program for parent educators and administrators in local school districts.

For more information, contact: Early Childhood Education Section, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

◇ NPAT parents were more knowledgeable about child-rearing practices and child development than were comparison parents.

NPAT parents were significantly more knowledgeable than comparison-group parents about the importance of physical stimuli in the child's environment, about constructive discipline, and about the developmental stages of children from birth to age three. No systematic relationships were revealed between any family background characteristics and NPAT parents' knowledge.

◇ Traditional characteristics of "risk" were not related to a child's development at age 3.

Traditional measures of "risk" (parents' age and education, income, single-parent families, number of younger siblings, and the amount of alternate care received) bore little or no relationship to measures of intelligence, achievement, and language development. NPAT parents AND children performed well, **regardless of socioeconomic disadvantages and other traditional risk factors.**

◇ NPAT staff were successful in identifying and intervening in "at-risk" situations.

Rather than using traditional measures of risk, NPAT staff identified children as being "at risk" by using criteria such as family stress, poor quality of parent-child interactions, and delayed language development. **These assessments were significantly and consistently related to all tested outcomes.** Children who were assessed as, and remained, at risk performed more poorly on all measures of intelligence, achievement, and language development.

The NPAT staff identified one-fourth of the participating children as potentially at risk at some point during the three-year project. In these cases, NPAT staff typically intervened by recommending that parents seek medical assistance or other specialized services. By age three, more than one-half of these risk conditions were reported corrected or improved. Parents' responses to the exit questionnaire showed that, of those referred for medical or other special services, 95 percent reported receiving adequate help.

◇ NPAT participation positively influenced parents' perceptions of school districts.

Participating parents were more likely to regard their school district as responsive to their children's needs than were parents of comparison group children: 53 percent of NPAT parents rated their district as "very responsive," versus 29 percent of comparison group parents.

◇ NPAT parents had positive feelings about the program's usefulness.

Ninety-nine percent of the responding NPAT parents reported a high degree of satisfaction with all project services (group meetings, private home visits, screenings). Home visits were identified as the most valuable service. Ninety-seven percent of the parents felt that project services made a difference in the way they perceived their parenting role.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The individuals, agencies and organizations listed on this page played key roles in implementing the New Parents as Teachers project and contributed significantly to the program's success.

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Major funding for development and dissemination of the NPAT project was provided by **The Danforth Foundation** and: The A.P. Green Foundation; The Hall Family Foundation; The Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations; Maritz Inc.; The Monsanto Fund; Don Orscheln; The Powell Family Foundation; and The Speas Foundation (administered by First National Bank).

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EVOLUTION FROM MODEL PROJECT TO STATEWIDE PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM

1981

- New Parents as Teachers (NPAT) Project planned as a four-year study of the impact on children's development and learning of a home/school partnership which begins at birth.
- Project initiated as a cooperative effort of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, The Danforth Foundation, and four local school districts.
  - Burton White, Director of the Center for Parent Education, Newton, Massachusetts, engaged as senior consultant through The Danforth Foundation funding.
  - Districts granted $30,000 each of Chapter 2, ECIA, funds for the first year of program development and implementation.
  - Preservice training provided for program personnel--state project director, two full-time parent educators and one part-time administrator per site. Training also made available to limited number of other early childhood professionals.
  - Statewide supervisory committee appointed.
  - Public awareness and recruitment of families begun.

1982

- First year of program operation begun with 380 families, representing a cross-section of socioeconomic status, age, and family configurations.
  - Enrollment restricted to families expecting their first child between December 1981 and September 1982. (Limited to first-time parents to avoid the effects of previous child-rearing experience.)
  - Mothers required to be at least 16 years of age at time of delivery.
- Services to families implemented, beginning in the third trimester of pregnancy.
  - Monthly personal visits conducted by parent educators to individualize the educational guidance for each family.

1982 continued . . .

    - Monthly group meetings provided, giving additional information and opportunity for sharing.
    - Monitoring of children's development ongoing.
    - Drop-in and play times provided for parent and child to promote networking among families.

- Curriculum materials for use by staff and parents developed and field-tested.
- Grants of $30,000 per site awarded for second project year. (Repeated in years three and four.)
- Staff training and program monitoring ongoing.
- Independent evaluation of the project initiated.
- Commissioner of Education's Committee on Parents as Teachers appointed to promote parent involvement in their children's education, beginning at birth.

1983

- All activities of the NPAT Project continued.
- Public awareness of the project promoted by the Committee on Parents as Teachers.

1984

- Early Childhood Development Act (SB 658) passed by the State Legislature, authorizing state funding for:
    - Developmental screening for children, ages one through four.
    - Parent education for families with children, birth through age four.
    - Parent-child programs for developmentally delayed three- and four-year-olds.
- The above services made mandatory on the part of school districts, subject to appropriations, and voluntary on the part of parents.
- All activities of the NPAT Project continued.
- NPAT designated by the Commissioner of Education as the state model for parent education, birth to age three, under SB 658.

1984 continued . . .

- Statewide training on the NPAT model begun for parent educators and administrators, conducted by the Department with assistance from the Committee on Parents as Teachers.
- Guidelines developed for implementation of SB 658.

1985

- Funding priorities under SB 658 identified by the Governor:
    - * Developmental screening for ages one and two.
    - * Parent education for families with children under age three.
- Funds in the amount of $2.8 million appropriated by the Legislature to provide the services recommended by the Governor to 10 percent of the State's eligible children and families.
- Independent evaluation of project completed with testing of random sample of NPAT Project children and a comparison group at age three.
- Evaluation results reported in The New York Times.
    - * Project children found to be:
        - Significantly more advanced in language development than their age mates.
        - Significantly superior in problem-solving and other intellectual abilities.
        - Significantly further along in social development than their peers.
    - * Parents' satisfaction with the program found to be nearly 100 percent.
- International interest and media coverage generated by evaluation findings.
- Statewide training in Parents as Teachers Program and screening made available without cost to all eligible Missouri school districts, and opened to out-of-state professionals on request.
- Parents as Teachers Programs and developmental screening initiated in 536 of 543 eligible Missouri school districts.

1986

- State funding increased to $5.7 million to screen 20 percent of one- and two-year-olds and provide parent education to 20 percent of families with children under age three. Increase in funds due largely to parent demand.
- Parent education and screening provided in all 543 eligible school districts.
- Initial training, follow-up regional workshops, and on-site consultation provided to school districts without charge.
- A "second wave" Parents as Teachers evaluation study initiated, involving 30 school districts of varied size and location and two cooperatives.
- Plans initiated for national expansion of the Parents as Teachers Program, in response to widespread interest.

1987

- Planning begun for longitudinal study of NPAT Project children and parents.
- Budget request submitted to the Legislature in the amount of $11.5 million to provide existing services to 30 percent of eligible children and families and extend screening and parent education through age four.
- PARENTS AS TEACHERS: THE NATIONAL CENTER established at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.
- National Advisory Board appointed and convened.

SENATE BILL 658

In recognition of the need and sense of preventative educational services to children under the age of five and their parents, the Missouri 82nd General Assembly enacted Senate Bill (SB) 658, commonly referred to as the Early Childhood Development Act. This Act, including 1985 amendments, is printed in its entirety below:

AN ACT

To provide state funding to school districts that
provide education programs and services to children
under five years of age and their parents.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri as follows:

Section 1. As used in sections 1 to 5 of this act, unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) Developmental screening is the process of measuring the progress of children to determine if there are problems or potential problems or advanced abilities in the areas of understanding and use of language, perception through sight, perception through hearing, motor development and hand-eye coordination, health, and physical development.

(2) Developmentally delayed children are children who, through developmental screening, are found to be performing below the norm for their age in one or more of the following skill areas: understanding and use of language, perception through sight, perception through hearing, motor development and hand-eye coordination.

(3) Handicapped children and severely handicapped children are those so defined in section 162.675, RSMo.

(4) Parent education includes the provision of resource materials on home learning activities, private and group educational guidance, individual and group learning experiences for the parent and child, and other activities that enable the parent to improve learning in the home.

Section 2. 1. School districts that offer an approved program of parent education shall be eligible for state reimbursement subject to appropriations therefor for each participating family. If a school district fails or is unable to offer an approved program of parent education the district shall enter into a contract which meets the requirements under section 4 of this act, with another district, public agency or state approved not for profit agency offering an approved program for such services. If the district finds that no approved program is available in another district, public agency or state approved not for profit agency, it shall request the state department of elementary and secondary education to assist it in obtaining from an approved program, services at the reimbursable rate.

2. School districts that offer an approved program of developmental screening for all children under the age of five years shall be eligible for state reimbursement subject to appropriations therefor for each participating child. If a school district fails or is unable to offer an approved program of developmental screening the district shall enter into a contract which meets the requirements under section 4 of this act, with another district, public agency or state approved not for profit agency offering an approved program for such services. If the district finds that no approved program is available in another district, public agency of state approved not for profit agency, it shall request the state department of elementary and secondary education to assist it in obtaining from an approved program, services at the reimbursable rate.

3. School districts that offer approved programs for developmentally delayed children ages three and four who may also be eligible for programs under the provisions of sections 162.670 to 162.995, RSMo, shall be eligible for state reimbursement subject to appropriations

provided the children are not receiving the same or similar service for handicapped or severely handicapped children under another program for which reimbursements from the department of elementary and secondary education are available to the district. If a school district fails or is unable to offer an approved program for developmentally delayed children ages three and four, the district shall enter into a contract which meets the requirements under section 4 of this act with another district, public agency or state approved not for profit agency offering an approved program for such services. If the district finds that no approved program is available in another district, public agency or state approved not for profit agency, it shall request the state department of elementary and secondary education to assist it in obtaining from an approved program, services at the reimbursable rate.

3. Programs shall be subject to review and approval under standards developed by the department of elementary and secondary education and published as an administrative rule under the provisions of chapter 536, RSMo.

Section 4. 1. Funding for sections 1 to 5 of this act shall be subject to appropriations made for this purpose.

2. Costs of contractual arrangements shall be the obligation of the school of residence of each preschool child. Costs of contractual arrangements shall not exceed an amount equal to an amount reimbursable to the school districts under the provisions of this act. No program shall be approved or contract entered into which requires any additional payment by participants or their parents or guardians.

3. Payments for participants for programs outlined in section 2 shall be uniform for all districts or public agencies.

Section 5. 1. No person shall be required to participate in any program of parent education or developmental screening, or in any program for developmentally delayed children, approved by the department of elementary and secondary education pursuant to sections 1 to 5 of this act.

2. Any information obtained as a result of an approved program of developmental screening is confidential, and may not be released to anyone other than parents or guardians without the express written consent of the parents or guardians of the child.

NATIONAL PUBLICITY ON PARENTS AS TEACHERS

As an outgrowth of the outstanding New Parents as Teachers evaluation and subsequent release of findings in The New York Times, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has been flooded with inquiries from all over the world. Thousands of executive evaluation summaries have been distributed, and requests for additional materials have been received from all 50 states and several foreign countries. Professionals from 25 states and Alberta, Canada have come to Missouri to be trained in the model.

Though unsolicited, the program has been widely publicized across the country through newspaper articles, television coverage, and radio broadcasts in many localities. The following chronology highlights the significant national publicity following the evaluation findings.

OCTOBER 1985	. Initial release of findings in **The New York Times** . Program coverage on **NBC, ABC,** and **CBS** . Front-page story in **USA Today** . Presentation at **Southern States Preschool Conference**, Atlanta, Georgia
NOVEMBER 1985	. Presentation at the **National Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference**, New Orleans, Louisiana
DECEMBER 1985	. Program coverage on **CNN**
JANUARY 1986	. Citation of Merit from **Instructor** magazine and letter of commendation from **President Reagan**
FEBRUARY 1986	. Presentation at the **National Governors' Association Conference**, Washington, D.C. . Program coverage on **PBS** . Program coverage on **CBS** Radio
MARCH 1986	. Feature article in **The Christian Science Monitor**
APRIL 1986	. Feature articles in **American Health**, **American Baby**, **The New York Time--Education Life** . Report in **Sesame Street**
JUNE 1986	. Presentation at the **National PTA Convention**, Little Rock, Arkansas
SEPTEMBER 1986	. Feature article in **Psychology Today** . Presentation at **Family Resource Coalition National Conference**, Chicago, Illinois . Inclusion of Program description in **First Lessons**, A Report on Elementary Education in America from United States Secretary of Education William Bennett
OCTOBER 1986	. Feature article in **Education USA** . Feature article in **Community Education Journal**

NOVEMBER 1986	. Feature article in **Educational Leadership** . Program filmed by **British Broadcasting Corporation** for showing on British public television as innovation in education
DECEMBER 1986	. Presentation to **Virginia state lawmakers**, Williamsburg, Virginia
JANUARY 1987	. Selected as a **Harvard Family Research Project** case study of innovative state-sponsored preventive programs for families . Program the subject of a chapter in newly released book, **A Better Start, New Choices for Early Learning**
FEBRUARY 1987	. Program featured on **ABC affiliate station WJW TV**, Cleveland, Ohio
MARCH 1987	. Report on Program at **National Educational Conference on Time for Results**, attended by **President Ronald Reagan** and Secretary of Education William Bennett, Columbia, Missouri . Presentation at **Conference of the Southern Association for Children Under Six**, Nashville, Tennessee
APRIL 1987	. Selected as finalist in the **Ford Foundation/John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University Innovations in State and Local Government** awards program . Presentation at **National Meeting of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**, Chicago, Illinois . National coverage on **CBS** television
MAY 1987	. Program one of six U.S. programs featured at International Conference on **Innovations in Special Education**, Kansas City, Missouri . Feature articles in **Principal** magazine
JUNE 1987	. Feature article in **McCall's** magazine
SEPTEMBER 1987	. Referenced in **Redbook**, The National PTA Section on Education . Noted in **Family Circle** article by **U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett**, "What Kids Should Know, When They Should Know It ... And How Parents Can Help" . Written up in **Child** magazine article, "The Third Parent: Changing the Role of the School" . One of ten recipients of the 1987 **Innovations in State and Local Government Award from the Ford Foundation/John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University**

Mr. Coats. Thank you very much, Mildred, and thanks to all of our panelists. If I could, I would like to ask some questions, some directed to the panel at large, and some specifically to particular individuals. Let me start with some of the particulars.

Diane, describe your class a little bit. You had some interesting concepts and techniques which you used to involve the parents, but what is the demographic makeup of your class?

Ms. Winters. Our school is a magnet school. Therefore, we draw from all parts of the city. Racially, it is made up of—well, I have 20 students. Racially, five of those are minorities and 15 are Caucasian. The socio-economic background is mixed. Upper to lower middle class I would assume would be the majority of those. We have a lot of professional parents as well as nonprofessional or even nonworking parents. So it is a cross section of the city.

Mr. Coats. How many years have you been using this program to involve parents in the classroom?

Ms. Winters. I guess ever since I've taught, to a certain degree. I have added on each year and have sort of tailored it to meet the needs of the classroom. But last year was my first year to implement the evening meetings, and that came out of necessity. I had a pretty rough bunch of kids and I felt like I needed the support of the parents as well as their needing the support of all the other parents involved. This year that started and it's working well.

Mr. Coats. How successful have you been? What is your participation rate of parents?

Ms. Winters. I would say about 95 percent, you know, in the evening meetings.

Mr. Coats. But that requires you to commit, I would guess, a considerable amount of your own time, to set up meetings at odd hours. You're not talking about just setting aside some time during the school day. You're having to accommodate, in a sense, the parents' schedule by making your own time available in the evenings; is that correct?

Ms. Winters. That's right.

Mr. Coats. What has been the support of the school and the school system for your extra efforts here?

Ms. Winters. I don't know that it's been focused on. I haven't really made a big deal out of it, other than within my own school building. You know, other teachers are aware of it and my building principal, but we haven't really publicized it through the system so much.

Mr. Coats. I particularly liked your thought about "good news" phone calls. Probably most parents, when they get a phone call or a phone message, that the teacher or principal wants to talk to them, inevitably their first thought is their child missed a class, they're failing a course, or they've been caught doing something, that there's something wrong.

How are your "good news" phone calls received? With shock or with——

Ms. Winters. Yes, they are. That was in my written statement but not in my oral statement. I try to do that particularly with parents who are used to hearing negative comments about their children. I find that somehow that puts them a little bit more at ease, especially prior to conference time. They seem a little bit hesitant about coming because they don't want to hear bad news, but if within a couple of weeks time prior to the conference, if I call and say I want to let them know their child has had an exceptionally good last two weeks and I'm real pleased with their behavior, or the amount of work that's being turned in, it is met with shock. As soon as they hear Mrs. Winters is on the phone, it's: "What has he done now?". So they're always pleased to find out that it is something positive.

Mr. Coats. Thank you.

Elaine, you referred to the need for external funding sources and the use of outside consultants. What kind of funds are we talking about here and is it realistic to expect that every class, every school system, is going to have the wherewithal to fund outside consultants to develop these kinds of programs?

Ms. Amerson. Well, the outside funding source in this particular instance was a foundation, and my understanding is that a number of corporations continually look for these kinds of funds and they are available in varying degrees.

Mr. Coats. But we're talking here more about the exception rather than the rule, aren't we? I mean, obviously, a well thought out program with a committed principal or a committed teacher may be able to attract special funding for a particular program, and I think that was true with you also, Yvonne. You had the Readers Digest grant. But how realistic is it to think that we're going to be able to attract enough outside support and outside funding if we were to expand this across the board?

Ms. Amerson. I'm not clear about that. I don't have the data with regard to school corporations around the area.

I would like to make the point, however, that the outside consultant does not necessarily have to be a paid consultant. That might also be a parent volunteer that has expertise in a particular area. The salient factor I think is the independence from the corporation and the independence from the funding source, so that it isn't perceived that this is coming from above down and this person is trying to make it happen as the powers that be would like it to happen. I would rather not focus so much on the need for a lot of funds to do this as the fact that it needs to happen. It may be parent volunteers. We have capable parents; we have universities located in different areas that would I think provide some of these opportunities.

Mr. Coats. Yvonne, you stated a cost of $1,800. Was that for your entire project to fund your school or a particular class? Is this covering the whole school?

Dr. Chan. This is covering the whole school, and if I have to do it again, I may not even need that—and let me expand on that.

Although I say the expenses is $1,800, but now, through a paper drive that the parents have, we are filling back in. Readers Digest gave us $5,000. Of that, we spent $1,800. Now, what that is being spent for is, for example, paint to paint the room, buying bulletin boards, getting some papers, which the school can certainly furnish, and in the beginning we did pay some staff member to set up materials for a workshop. But once it is set up, it's there.

Now, meanwhile, we can easily work around this. For example, in school districts in Los Angeles, we have a teacher shortage. The majority of my teachers, 90 percent, have been teaching for less than five years. All these teachers will earn salary points by attending staff development or attending workshops. That is part of the system. Therefore, having them stay after school or coming to work on Saturdays is absolutely no problem.

Another way is, as administrator, I do have the option of making 20 shortened days. That means I dismiss the kids 35 minutes early for those days for staff development purposes. Meanwhile, outside resource, all these teachers who are new are enrolled in universities for credentials, and through the university they are assigned professors. These professors, as long as I myself and the students contact them and make them feel extremely welcome in my school, I get these consultants in and out from universities with no pay. Either they would do a research project for their own benefit, for their university, or they are doing it for the supervising student teachers that happen to be teaching in my school. Sometimes I talk them into supervising five instead of one, and they would do it.

Mr. COATS. Mildred, I think you said Missouri spends $150 per family in a nontargeted program.

Ms. WINTER. Right.

Mr. COATS. Is that available to every school system in the State of Missouri?

Ms. WINTER. Yes, it is. We currently have funding to serve 30 percent of the families, which represents about 53,000 families. Each school district is given its quota that it's assured funding for based on the 1980 census data. Many districts elect to overserve their quota because they see the value of it and don't——

Mr. COATS. How are they paid for that?

Ms. WINTER. How are they paid for that? Well, if they overserve their quota, they are really on their own, or if one district underserves its quota, that money is reallocated to those that overserved.

Mr. COATS. It sounds like the state is committed to making this a state-wide educational project. If it is as successful as you say it is—and I have looked into it in great detail, as you may know. If it's as successful as it appears to be, is the state legislature committed to funding it 100 percent, if necessary? Do you have any feel for that?

Ms. WINTER. I think they feel there should always be a local commitment to the program through in-kind or whatever dollars the district can provide, because that is our policy in Missouri. We don't fund any of our educational programs fully through the state, but the degree of local involvement or commitment varies from one district to another, as does the cost. The major cost, of course, is the parent educator. Most parent educators are hired on a part-time basis because that works well into the schedule of young parents who are excellent in this role. That makes the program very cost effective.

I will say that we hope to work toward increased funding by the legislature. Per family, we're asking for an increase to $170 for the coming year.

Mr. COATS. Joan, who pays for your program? Where do your funds come from?

Ms. SLAY. Private money from business and foundations.

Mr. **Coats**. What do you see for the future for Designs for Change? Is there an expansion of what you're currently under, or are you out seeking additional funds, or do you think you'll be heading off in another direction? Are you just trying to plant ideas, plant seeds, and move on? What is the support level and what are your thoughts for the future?

Ms. **Slay**. We are committed on a very long-term basis to Chicago, to the minority and low-income areas. Right now we're deeply involved in a movement to restructure the Chicago public school system. The strike this past fall in Chicago for the first time has created an outcry from parents that I think both our state legislators and our mayor are looking at very carefully. It won't be business as usual.

Our position is to involve our parents and see what we can do, so that when the Secretary of Education comes to Chicago he doesn't say, in truth, Chicago has the worst system in the country.

Mr. **Coats**. Who is easiest to motivate? You have all talked about strategies here to motivate parents. You said it takes a motivated principal, a committed teacher, but there are barriers to getting the commitment out of parents or motivating the parents. Most of those barriers were directed toward the lower educated, lower income perhaps, parents that might feel intimidated by getting involved in the system.

But do you find that it is easier, once you break through those barriers, easier to maintain a consistent involvement of the lower income parents as opposed, say, to the more upwardly mobile, higher income level? Is there a distinction to make here?

Anybody. I just throw that open.

Dr. **Chan**. I would like to respond to that.

With me, in working with a lower income group, once you get established, the network goes much faster, for a couple of major reasons. They live in a very closely related unit. These are apartment houses. We're not talking about single family homes. So the physical proximity right there is the first advantage. So if you really get one leadership role within, say, 10 or 20 apartment houses, you pretty much get all 20.

Then, of course, the fact that they have never really participated as much before, and just the very first dosage is extremely tempting. If you have the strategy to maintain them, then you can. It's really a wonderful payoff.

Mr. **Coats**. Mildred, I would like you to comment because you have a cross section in your program.

Ms. **Winter**. Right. The answer is in using different strategies with different types of families and parents. Obviously, to attract in families who live in the housing projects, you have to go where the families are. You have to go to the well baby clinics, you go to the WIC program, you go to the hospitals, to the childbirth classes, to let parents know of your services.

But I think we are making a mistake if we think it's only the poor families who want and need to be well informed teachers of their children. Often the two parent-family, both professionals, very busy, have very little time, as you mentioned, to give to their children. So they have to be approached on their level in a different way. The mix of families that come together in a program of this sort is very healthy because they get to find out maybe for the first time that they have something in common. They all have concerns about their children and their kids are having the same problems and growing up in the same way, so there is a communication that develops across educational and socio-economic lines that is very good.

I think we have to remember always that the school has to go the second mile in any kind of parent involvement program. You really have to go out and sell it to parents. They're not quite sure about you at first.

Mr. **Coats**. One of the continuing debates that we have to deal with at the Federal level is what the role of the Federal Government should be in all of this versus the role of the states and the local community school systems. I would like to get your thoughts on that.

You know, we mandate parent involvement in the Public Law 94-142 handicap program. Should we be mandating parent involvement at the Federal level through other programs, or just mandate it across the board? Give me some insights as to what you think the role of the Federal Government ought to be and where we ought to go with that. I would really like to hear from each one of you briefly with your thoughts on that.

Ms. **Amerson**. Thank you, Representative Coats. I don't like the term mandating in that sense. I think stimulating what one can do affirmatively to stimulate parent involvement is preferable.

One of the comments I made in my written statement dealt with paper pushers. I think were you to mandate parent involvement, you probably would help significantly a very small number of families because you would give some jobs to people to push paper. I think 94-142 certainly has its share of complaints with regard to what has to be reported and so forth.

I think the stimulation of holding up programs that work well and, where the funds are available, funding those and having those available to be known and copied, that kind of positive copying would be much more helpful I think than mandating. I'm not sure that you can mandate parent involvement.

Mr. **Coats**. Dr. Chan.

Dr. **Chan**. I definitely agree. You cannot mandate this because we're all human and when someone says thou shalt do this versus someone saying please come and help us do it, because we all have the same goals and it's very different, if the Federal Government would put the parent effort as part of the total educational reform. Usually what you see in educational reform is maybe parent involvement as a recommendation. Don't make it just a very simple recommendation but a basic component. It is just as important as the teacher, the administrator and the parent. Everything goes across the board in three ways throughout the whole program.

Mr. **Coats**. Diane.

Ms. **Winters**. I agree with these two people, also. I think once you've mandated you're more or less turning people off. As they suggested, I think setting up and showing examples of how parent involvement does help in a child's education would be more purposeful. I think I have used, in speaking with different parent groups, the "What Works" statistics, and have even copied off some of those things in regards to homework and the parent as the child's first teacher and have passed those out. I think parents appreciate knowing those kinds of things, whether they're of a higher or lower socio-economic background.

I have a mother of 10 children, whose child is in my classroom. When you were speaking, it brought home some things about that. You would think she would be tired of kids all day long. But she loves to come to school and share her ideas and just her personal self with the class. Not only does she come, but her oldest son, who is a high school student, volunteers in my classroom, too, every day of the week. So it has created a bond. I have his younger brother in the classroom, so now I have the high school student, the parent, and the student himself, which sort of creates sort of a little family within itself. So I think it can be done if teachers are willing to let it be done.

Mr. COATS. Mildred, I think you've answered it, but go ahead. You talked about it in your discussion.

Ms. WINTER. I think the Federal Government can be of great assistance in helping to disseminate the programs that are working, that are successful, so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel, and then providing incentive money to other states to prove that the program works in their own state, to develop the support for legislative and local support in their own states. There is nothing like demonstrating that, if it works in Missouri, it works in Indiana, too. I think that's a real important piece of the pie.

Mr. COATS. Joan, anything you want to add there?

Ms. SLAY. Yes, please. I would like to see the Federal Government provide incentives to states that would encourage them to involve parents in planning for school reform and parent involvement. Too often the parents are brought in after the planning and the program has been developed. The incentives I'm talking about don't always have to be money, either.

Mr. COATS. Well, what strikes me is that we've had so much creative input this morning, you're all coming from different backgrounds, different areas, you're dealing with different demographic classes of students and so forth, but the flexibility and the creativity that you bring to the process in really trying to achieve the same goal—that is, parent involvement—I think has been very healthy.

My own personal feeling is that, were we to establish this at a national level, we would stifle that creativity and that flexibility. I agree with you, that the demonstration grants, the clearinghouse information process, the incentives, those types of involvements might be proper at the Federal level, but we would be making a grave mistake in attempting to write out of Washington regulations that would mandate how these programs are carried out, tying it to a certain level of funding and basically forcing school systems into a situation where they would be filling out a lot of forms. They would have to hire people to make the applications and so forth to comply with the regulations and we really wouldn't end up with the flexibility and creativity that you people have described.

I think it has been a wealth of good ideas and good information. We hope that we can help you disseminate some of that by making this a part of our record and a part of the report that we will be issuing in this committee. Again, I want to thank each of the five of you for taking the time and making the effort to contribute to that report, to contribute to our record, and to be with us this morning. Thank you very much.

I would now like to call our second panel. I would announce also that, although we are not under a time restriction and we want to stay as long as necessary to give everyone a chance to participate that has been asked to testify, if we are not finished by 11:55, we will be taking a 10-minute recess period at that time and then come back and finish up.

Let me call to the second panel Dr. Henry Levin, Director, Center for Educational Research at Stanford University; Joan Lipsitz, Program Director, Elementary and Secondary Education for the Lilly Endowment here in Indianapolis; Izona Warner, Parents In Touch, Indianapolis Public Schools; Mary Jackson Willis, Director of the School Council Assistance Project, College of Education, University of South Carolina; Ann Kamps, who is Administrative Assistant to the First Lady, Office of the Governor of Arkansas; and Marcella Taylor, Senior Officer for the Center for Community Relations and Special Populations, Department of Education in Indiana.

I welcome each of you to the panel. Again, I would state that to the extent that you can summarize your written statement—we will place your entire statement in the record. To the extent you can summarize, it leaves us more time for discussion at the end. We will begin with Dr. Levin.

STATEMENT OF HENRY M. LEVIN, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, ECONOMICS, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, AND DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, PALO ALTO, CA

Dr. **Levin**. Thank you very much, Congressman.

My official title is Professor of Education and Economics, at Stanford, and Director of its Center for Educational Research. But I think I come to you, in part, as a parent of five children from the ages of 3 to 23, the grandparent of one, a school board member, and a member of a bilingual family. My wife is Hispanic and we are a bilingual family.

Sir, it is important to start off by talking about the present crisis of the disadvantaged, very briefly. I think that any objective view of the status of this population rightly should create a national rage, at how this population is treated by society and the schools. These students do not have the family or home resources to do well in school as they are presently organized. They represent about one-third of our students in kindergarten through 12th grade, and that proportion is rising. Half of the children drop out before they graduate from high school, and even those who do make it to the 12th grade are three or more years behind in grade level and achievement.

They then create a problem for us. Even those who aren't concerned about the equity issues—and I am deeply concerned about the equity issues—even those who are simply concerned about their own lives in a self-serving society ought to be concerned be-

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cause they represent an increasing proportion of our entry labor force and therefore there are economic consequences. There are consequences for higher education, for the costs of social services and, indeed, for the democratic functioning of society as we increasingly see two tiers, one of haves and the others of have-nots.

Now, in our present schools, these students get farther and farther behind the longer they are in school. This has led us at Stanford to try to consider ways in which we can change this pattern. I dare say that even programs that have been thought to be successful are statistically successful—that is, they make a statistically significant difference, but not a socially significant difference. That is, they will typically bring students up from the 15th percentile to the 17th or 18th, and that's important, that's good work. But that does not enable these young people to get into either the educational mainstream initially, nor does it bring them into the social, political, or economic mainstream eventually.

We have gone to an approach that we call the accelerated school approach, or the Accelerated Schools Project. That has a fairly simple goal, which is to get these young people up to grade level by the end of elementary school; that is, to get them into the educational mainstream. We feel that it is a far more powerful approach to reducing dropouts, teenage pregnancies, and drugs than letting the damage get done in the early grades or even before children get to school and then trying to repair the damage later.

Now, the accelerated school is described in the statement that I have provided to the committee, so I will just mention some of the main features. One of the most important is that of a unity of purpose. The most important goal of this school is to bring these young people into the educational mainstream in a healthy way, with high self-esteem, a feeling of learning, productivity, and a feeling that there are alternatives for the future.

In order to do this, we put a very heavy emphasis on the empowerment of both staff and parents to accelerate learning. Under existing approaches, particularly in your large urban areas, so many of the important decisions are made way above where the learning actually takes place, that the main participants don't have any feeling that they can change the situation. Therefore, we have to alter those conditions. We also emphasize accelerated techniques of instruction and content.

We believe that it will take a six-year process of working with the school to move it to the point to where the children will be performing up to grade level and that the school will be performing in a way that it will be solving its own problems and addressing its own needs. We are presently working with two demonstration schools in the San Francisco Bay area, and we have both a research component and a dissemination program at Stanford. You can send requests to me for information, if you would like.

Now let me talk specifically about parents and accelerated schools. I place this in the context of accelerated schools because I think one of the things I would stress is that without changes in the way schools function, it seems to me that parental involvement is going to be very, very limited. That is, unless we can create schools in which parents are considered to be an important resource, in which there are decisions that parents can make that have meaning for their children and their schools, unless the school itself has a goal of bringing these young people into the mainstream, I think that parental involvement must necessarily be limited. Therefore, the most important premise that I make is that parental involvement has got to be part of a major change in the way that we view schools, particularly schools for at-risk children or disadvantaged children in America.

Somehow, we have to make the school much more meaningful to the child and the family rather than just going through the mechanical motions, which is often what we do when we talk about educational reform.

The second point is that we can't model this after PTA approaches. I think that was brought out very well in the excellent presentations made by the first panel. Rather, we have to look at the strengths of these parents and these families and say what is it that we can do to get parents involved in a meaningful way, given their strengths—and their strengths are considerable.

I always start off with two parental strengths when I talk with teachers, because teachers give me a litany of weaknesses, and you can't build programs on weaknesses. The first thing is these parents love their children very dearly. Secondly, they want their children to do well, much better than they have done. Those are two powerful strengths. Indeed, they're passions. If you can work with people's passions, you can get them involved in very important ways.

The bridge here that has to be constructed is the need to provide parental activities that will help the child and that the parents are capable of accomplishing. That is what we have tried to do through working with the parent and the child together, as well as the parent and the school. More specifically, we try to get the parents behind accelerated programs for their own children and we try to show them that we can't accomplish it without their playing an important role. So we have turned their own participation around. Usually the schools think of them as a problem; we think of them as a strength. Indeed, they are part of the solution rather than a part of the problem as far as we're concerned.

In terms of parental empowerment, we put a very heavy emphasis on the kinds of activities that were mentioned in the previous panel, so I won't go into those in great detail, other than to say that the following are crucial: Information, providing appropriate forms, getting meetings in the community, trying to make the school more of a center of the community; building transitions between the community; the school having a parental lounge, a place where parents can come, where there's reading material, where there is a school representative; social events that tie together the activities of the school with the lives of the parents, working with social service agencies; and developing parental training programs.

Let me finish up by saying that, above all—and I know I have emphasized this, but I have to say it again—parental involvement must be part of a well-orchestrated, overall strategy to bring disadvantaged youngsters into the educational mainstream. It should not be an isolated strategy unto itself.

Thank you very much.

[Prepared statement of Henry M. Levin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HENRY M. LEVIN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, PALO ALTO, CA

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statement is to discuss the need for accelerated schools for disadvantaged students and the specific role that parent involvement plays in such schools. In this section I will review briefly the challenges of the educationally disadvantaged and the consequences of failing to address those challenges. I will also discuss why present approaches are not successful. In the following section, I will provide a short description of the Accelerated School as a solution. In the final section I will suggest the importance of parental or family involvement in making accelerated schools succeed.

The educationally disadvantaged population consists of students who lack the home and community resources to fully benefit from conventional schooling practices. Such students are especially concentrated among minority groups, immigrants, non-English-speaking families and economically-disadvantaged populations. Because of poverty, cultural differences, or linguistic differences they tend to have low academic achievement and to experience high secondary school dropout rates. And, these educational deficiencies translate into poor life chances with respect to employment and income as well as political and social participation in American society.

The challenge of educationally disadvantaged students has become especially prominent because of the rapid growth of these populations. High birth rates and rates of immigration (both legal and undocumented) among these groups have increased substantially the numbers and proportions of disadvantaged students in U.S. schools. Recent estimates suggest that on a national basis, about 30 percent of students in primary and secondary schools are disadvantaged and that this proportion will continue to rise sharply in the future. In many of the major cities of the U.S. the proportion of disadvantaged students exceeds 80 percent. Even these figures understate the magnitude of the problem because about half of the disadvantaged student group fails to complete high school.

In the absence of substantial educational interventions, the rapidly increasing population of educational disadvantaged students will ultimately emerge as a large and growing population of disadvantaged adults. Such students enter school with achievement levels that are below those of their non-disadvantaged counterparts, and the disparity in achievement grows over the schooling experience. The low levels of educational achievement undermine access to jobs and other adult opportunities.

Unless substantial headway is made in meeting the needs of these students, the potential for social, political, and economic conflict and disruption will grow enormously in the coming decades. These bases for disruption include: (1) massive inequalities resulting from the emergence of a dual society with a large and growing underclass composed mainly of minorities and disadvantaged whites facing high unemployment rates, low earnings, and menial occupations, (2) serious challenges to higher education as increasing numbers of students enter colleges and universities without adequate preparation, (3) reduced economic competitiveness of the nation as well as states and industries most heavily impacted by these populations, and (4) higher costs for public services that are a response to a growth in poverty and its social effects.

Failure of Present Approaches

Although the states have initiated a wave of widespread educational reforms, they have not really addressed the specific needs of the educationally disadvantaged. The reforms stress raising standards at the secondary level, without providing additional resources or new strategies to assist the disadvantaged in meeting these higher standards. Thus, it is not surprising that the status of the disadvantaged has not been found to have improved under the latest reforms. Any strategy for improving the educational plight of the disadvantaged must begin at the elementary level and must be dedicated to preparing children for doing high quality work in secondary school. Simply raising standards at the secondary level without making it possible for the disadvantaged to meet the new standards, is more likely to increase their dropping out.

The present approach to assisting the educationally disadvantaged is to provide them with remedial or compensatory services to improve their educational achievement. But, such a strategy seems to ensure that such students never catch up to the mainstream because it: (1) reduces expectations for the students and their teachers by institutionalizing them into categories of slow learners; (2) slows down the pace of instruction so that they get farther and farther behind their non-disadvantaged peers; (3) emphasizes the mechanics of basic skills without providing substance that will keep the student interested and motivated; (4) provides no mechanism or incentives for closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students; and (5) does not provide adequate involvement of teachers and parents in formulating the strategies that they must implement in schools and the home to improve the learning of their students and children.

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS AS A SOLUTION

A number of researchers at Stanford and other institutions have been doing research and development for the past several years on alternatives to present practice. The Accelerated Schools concept provides an umbrella for linking this work into a school-wide framework. The goal of the Accelerated Schools Program is to accelerate the learning of the disadvantaged so that they are able to perform at grade level by the end of elementary school. Such schools must be characterized by high expectations on the part of teachers, parents, and students; deadlines by which students will be expected to meet particular educational requirements; stimulating instructional programs, planning by the educational staff who will offer the program, and the use of all available resources in the community including parents, senior citizens, and social agencies.

The Accelerated School is a transitional elementary school that is designed to bring disadvantaged students up to grade level by the completion of the sixth grade. The goal of the school is to enable disadvantaged students to take advantage of mainstream secondary school instruction by effectively closing the achievement gap in elementary school. The approach is also designed expected to reduce dropouts, drug use, and teenage pregnancies by creating a strong sense of self-worth and educational accomplishment for students who would normally feel rejected by schools and frustrated in terms of their own abilities.

The school is based upon an accelerated curriculum that is designed to bring all children up to grade level. The entire organization of the school will focus on this goal. The approach is based upon the construction of an assessment system that evaluates the performance of each child at school entry and sets a trajectory for meeting the overall school goal for that child. Periodic evaluations on wide-spectrum, standardized achievement tests as well as tailored assessments created by school staff for each strand of the curriculum will enable the school to see if the child is on the anticipated trajectory.

Major curriculum aspects include a heavily language-based approach, even in mathematics. Language use will be emphasized across the curriculum, with an early introduction to writing and reading for meaning. A stress will also be placed upon interesting applications of new tools to everyday problems and events to stress the usefulness of what is being taught and learned and to introduce a problem-solving orientation.

Parents will be deeply involved in two ways. First, they will be asked to participate in a written agreement which clarifies the obligations of parents, school staff, and students. The agreement will be explained to parents and translated, if necessary. Second, the parents will be given opportunities to interact with the school program and to receive training in order to provide active learning assistance and support for their children. Parents will be asked to set high educational expectations for their children and to support their success as well as to encourage reading.

Other features include the implementation of an extended-day program in which rest periods, physical activities, the arts, and a time period for independent assignments or homework will be provided. During this period, college students and senior citizen volunteers will work with individual students to provide learning assistance. Since many of the students are "latch-key" children, the extension of the school day is likely to be attractive to parents. Instructional strategies will also include peer tutoring and cooperative learning. Both have been shown to be especially effective with disadvantaged students.

These broad features of the accelerated school are designed to make it a total institution for accelerating the educational progress of the disadvantaged, rather than just grafting on compensatory or remedial classes to elementary schools with a conventional agenda. Central to the strategy is the placement of curriculum and instructional decisions in the hands of the instructional staff of the school. Those charged with responsibility for providing the instruction and making the school succeed will also be responsible for decision-making.

Each school will have an overall steering committee and task forces that will be composed of teachers and other instructional personnel. The principal will serve a central function as instructional leader in coordinating and guiding this activity and in addressing the logistical needs to translate decisions into reality. School staff will set out a program that is consonant with student needs and the strengths of the district and school staff. Information, technical assistance, and training will be provided by district personnel. In this way, the reform will be a "bottom-up" approach in which those who are providing the instruction will make the decisions which they will implement and evaluate.

We believe that this approach has a high probability of ultimate success because of is emphasis on the instrumental goal of bringing students up to grade level by the completion of sixth grade; its stress on acceleration of learning and high expectations; its reliance on a professional model of school governance which is attractive to educators; its capacity to benefit from instructional strategies that have shown good results for the disadvantaged within existing models of compensatory education; and its ability to draw upon all of the resources available to the community including parents and senior citizens.

The Stanford Accelerated School Project is now assisting two elementary schools to establish accelerated school programs. These two schools are in San Francisco and Redwood City, California. Both schools have very high concentrations of disadvantaged students. The Redwood City school enrollments are comprised predominantly of hispanic students, while those in our San Francisco school consist of a racial mixture (31 percent black, 27 percent hispanic, 17 percent Chinese, and so on).

The purpose of these pilot programs is to begin to implement the process in two schools while simultaneously providing a basis for building our knowledge on how to implement the changes. Ultimately, we expect to be able to train groups on a regional basis to assist school districts to create accelerated schools in their jurisdictions. In addition, we expect to create an Accelerated Schools clearing-house at Stanford that will do research, disseminate information, and provide training for a national movement to address boldly the needs of disadvantaged youngsters.

The stress is on the elementary school as a whole rather than on a particular grade, curriculum, approach to teacher training, or other more limited strategy. Underlying the organizational approach are three major assumptions: First, the strategy must enlist a unity of purpose among all of the participants. Second, it must "empower" all of the major participants and raise their feelings of efficacy and responsibility for the outcomes of the school. Third, it must build on the considerable strengths of the participants rather than decrying their weaknesses.

Unity of purpose refers to agreement among parents, teachers, and students on a common set of goals for the school that will be the focal point of everyone's efforts. Clearly, these should focus on bringing children into the educational mainstream so that they can fully benefit from their further schooling experiences and adult opportunities.

Empowerment refers to the ability of the key participants to make important decisions at the school level and in the home to improve the education of students. It is based upon breaking the present stalemate among administrators, teachers, parents, and students in which the participants tend to blame each other as well as other factors "beyond their control" for the poor educational outcomes of disadvantaged students. Unless all of the major actors can be empowered to seek a common set of goals and influence the educational and social process that can achieve those goals, it is unlikely that the desired improvements will take place or be sustained.

An accelerated school must build upon an expanded role for all groups to participate in and take responsibility for the educational process and educational results. Such an approach requires a shift to a school-based decision approach with heavy involvement of teachers and parents and new administrative roles.

Building on strengths refers to utilizing all of the learning resources that students, parents, school staff, and communities can bring to the educational endeavor. In the quest to place blame for the lack of efficacy of schools in improving the education of the disadvantaged, it is easy to exaggerate weaknesses of the various participants and ignore strengths. Parents have considerable strengths in serving as positive influences for the education of their children, not the least of which a deep love for their children and a desire for their children to succeed. Teachers are capable of insights, intuition, and teaching and organizational acumen that are lost in schools that fail to draw upon these strengths by excluding teachers from participating in the decisions that they must implement. Both parents and teachers are largely underutilized sources of talent in the schools.

The strengths of disadvantaged students are often overlooked because they lack the learning behaviors associated with middle-class students rather than seeing that disadvantaged students carry their own unusual assets which can be used to accelerate their learning. These often include an interest and curiosity in oral and artistic expression, abilities to learn through the manipulation of appropriate learning materials, a capability for engrossment in intrinsically interesting tasks, and the ability to learn to write before attaining competence in decoding skills which are prerequisite to reading. In addition, such students can serve as enthusiastic and effective learning resources for other students through peer tutoring and cooperative learning approaches.

School-based administrators are also underutilized by being placed in "command" roles to meet the directives and standard-operating-procedures of districts rather than to work creatively with parents, staff, and students. And, communities have considerable resources including youth organizations, senior citizens, businesses, and religious groups that should be viewed as major assets for the schools and the children of the community. The strengths of these participants can be viewed as a major set of resources for creating accelerated schools.

Within the context of a unity of purpose, empowerment and building-on-strengths, the Accelerated School utilizes an accelerated curriculum and accelerated instructional strategies to bring all children up to grade level and into the educational mainstream. A major focus is to ensure that all students see themselves in a very positive light as productive learners with many future possibilities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

The three principles of unity of purpose, empowerment, and building on strengths also are pertinent to the case of parental involvement. With respect to unity of purpose, it is important to get parents committed to many of the same educational goals as the school. Most parents are willing to buy into accelerated education for their own children, so the main challenge is to explain to them what the goals and activities of accelerated schools. Parental empowerment refers to the creation of effective roles on their part where they can contribute to the accelerated education of their children. Finally, building on strengths refers to the recognition of the strengths that parents have and how these might be used as a basis for program development. It is useful to comment on each of these.

(1) Unity of Purpose-- Most schools treat parents of educationally disadvantaged students as obstacles rather than allies. It is common to hear that the parents lack resources and are not supportive of their childrens' schools or education. The result is that schools view parental concerns as being contrary to those of the school. The fact of the matter is that most parents of such children want their children to succeed in school, but they don't know how to be supportive within the resource limits that constrain their lives. Accordingly, it is necessary to communicate with parents on the potential of accelerated programs for their children and the need for parental support. The parents must be viewed as allies rather than problems, and they must be told that accelerated education cannot succeed without their participation.

(2) Empowerment-- In order for parents to participate in educational decisions affecting their children, they need the opportunities to do so. These opportunities will depend upon providing parents with feasible activities that they can pursue in behalf of their children; establishing communications between school and parents that keep them informed; and offering training and educational activities for parents that will enhance their capacity to contribute to their childrens' education.

With respect to feasible activities, we will discuss those below under the category of "building on strengths." Communications refer to the practice of keeping parents informed on all school matters that are pertinent to their child or parental participation. Parents need information on school programs, expectations, and the participation, progress, and behavior of their child. They also need information on parental activities, meetings, and roles. Although much of this information must be communicated in writing, it is important to seek other vehicles such as community meetings, telephone calls, parent conferences, and scheduled home visits.

The style of communication should be one which maximizes the effective dissemination of information from school to parent and parent to school. This means that schools should hire parent coordinators who can undertake this function rather than relying only on traditional newsletters or PTA organizations. Such coordinators should reach out to homes and community organizations rather than limiting activities to the school site. Availability of school personnel should extend to weekends and evenings, if necessary, in order to accommodate parent schedules.

Educational and training activities are especially important for parents to assist them in meeting the educational needs of their children. These activities can extend from parental counseling to a single training session to multiple sessions. For example, counselors can assist parents to address specific concerns that the parents or teachers may have. Single sessions can be given on helping children with homework, developing good study habits, and productive parent-teacher conferences. Multiple sessions can address specific subjects on which parents need to learn or brush-up in order to assist their children. These activities can be combined with social activities such as coffees, or musical and theatrical performances at the school. Many of the training sessions can include both parents and students as is done in Family Math, a successful program for parents to assist their children in mathematics. Finally, schools should set out a special place for parents with comfortable furniture, coffee, and reading materials on the school and on children. The parent lounge can be used for parent meetings, discussions with other parents or with teachers, and for a bulletin board with coming events.

The program must build on the many strengths of parents in caring for and wishing to assist their children. All parents love their children and want them to do well in life. There are many simple actions that parents can take to reinforce the activities of the school. We have tried to build many of these into the approach that we have been developing for parents in the Accelerated School.

For example, all parents or guardians will be asked to affirm an agreement that clarifies the goals of the Accelerated School and the obligations of parents, students, and school staff. The agreement will be explained to parents and translated, if necessary. Parental obligations will include such supportive roles as ensuring that their children go to bed at a reasonable hour and attend school regularly and punctually. They will be asked to set high educational expectations for their children, to talk to them regularly about the importance of school, and to take an interest in their children's activities and the materials that the children bring home.

They will be asked to encourage their children to read on a daily basis and to ensure that independent assignments are addressed. They will also be expected to respond to queries from the school. The purpose is to emphasize the importance of the parental role through the dignity of a written agreement that is affirmed by all parties. Students and school staff will also have appropriate obligations regarding their roles, with the understanding that the Accelerated School will only succeed if all three parties work together.

Parents will be given opportunities to interact with the school program and to receive training for providing active assistance to their children. Such training will include not only the skills for working with a child, but also many of the academic skills necessary to understand what the child is doing. In this respect, it may be necessary to work closely with agencies offering adult basic education to provide the parental foundation. The parental dimension can improve the capacity and effort of the child as well as increase the time devoted to academic learning and provide additional instructional resources in the home.

It is important to emphasize that parent participation is not a solution in itself. If the school does not provide a strong commitment to the needs of educationally disadvantaged children; if teachers are beleaguered by daily demands on them in schools that lack a unity of purpose and good leadership; and if all instructional strategies are traditional remedial approaches; there is little that a parent involvement program can do. In fact, under those conditions, the school will be so lackluster that there will be little to attract the participation of parents.

Parent involvement must be a part of a well-orchestrated, overall strategy to bring educationally-disadvantaged students into the educational mainstream. With a dynamic school program, parents will feel energized and welcome. Under those conditions they will be part of the "solution", not part of the "problem". Accelerated Schools represent an overall approach for incorporating parents into an unusually promising strategy to incorporate at-risk youngsters into the educational mainstream, and ultimately into the social, political, and economic mainstream of the Nation.

Mr. Coats. Thank you very much, Dr. Levin.
Joan.

STATEMENT OF JOAN LIPSITZ, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, LILLY ENDOWMENT; INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Ms. Lipsitz. Congressman Coats and staff members who have put so much time into preparing today's hearing, and all guests, from the MAP conference, welcome to Indianapolis.

My name is Joan Lipsitz. I am Program Director for Elementary and Secondary Education at the Lilly Endowment. Prior to my coming here close to two years ago, I was Director of the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

On the advice of an attorney, I want to say to you that the views I am expressing are my own rather than those of the Lilly Endowment. I do not represent or speak for the Endowment, and you know the congressional law that makes me say that.

I have been asked to address——

Mr. Coats. We're not going to convene a panel here to investigate you if you happen to say something. [Laughter.]

Ms. Lipsitz. I have been asked to address my comments to two questions, both of which are very important and both of which I am honored to be asked to discuss with you. First, what is so special about early adolescence that a reform effort specific to that age group is called for, and second, why involve parents, and what are the barriers and successes in doing so in a substantive reform effort?

Early adolescence is an especially vulnerable time in life, marked by dramatic physical, emotional, social and intellectual changes. It is a challenge for young adolescents to cope with so much internal disruption. To compound this challenge, many are asked to make a major change in their schooling at the very time when they are dealing with numerous dramatic internal changes. And to make matters even more trying, adults begin to react differently to these young people as they start showing the physiological signs of puberty. Many adults, especially parents and teachers, feel unsettled by young adolescents, and the youngsters have to deal with this.

So here we have an especially vulnerable group of young people whose task it is not only to integrate all the internal changes going on in their bodies and emotions, but also because of us, to deal with external changes in adults and even in the schools they attend. I am not sure that we ask any other age group to deal with so much change simultaneously and so rapidly, not even the elderly. We should be mindful of the fact that early adolescence is a pivotal time in life, determining in large measure many of these young people's future options and their quality of life.

Several major foundations are devoting considerable resources to research and programs targeted to the early adolescent age group. Funders have heard, over and over again, that efforts to stem the dropout tide or prevent premature pregnancies or substance abuse or any of the woes that young people are heir to come too late in the senior high years. So we are beginning to attend to the junior high or middle school years, not aggressively and consistently, but sporadically, not because of major policy mandates but because pockets of interest, attentiveness and energy are forming in selected agencies, school districts, and sometimes even in communities.

At the same time the major school reform reports are silent about the middle school years. I am concerned that we are in danger of doing what we usually do about early adolescence. We take what we know about high schools and move that knowledge down, as if it applied equally to this distinct group of young people. A reform effort targeted to middle schools is required because the young people in them are neither elementary nor high school age. They are young adolescents with characteristics and needs of their own. If we talk generically about school reform, we will once again overlook this pivotal time in schooling, and in life.

I think we also have to be mindful that, particularly among poor and minority youngsters in less advantaged urban settings, the number of students who fail or fall desperately behind our expectations for school achievement seems to grow almost uncontrollably in the middle school years. These young people fall farther and farther behind, until they either drop out or struggle in remedial programs throughout the rest of their school years. We cannot afford to be complacent about this dramatic failure, both because of the personal toll it takes, closing options before they have even opened, and because of the social and economic toll that results from a dead end reached so early in life.

Unless we insist upon attentiveness to young adolescents, their parents, the schools they are in, and the community resources available to them, they will continue to be inappropriately and even mindlessly folded into our efforts on behalf of older adolescents. We all want to know what works. What works is being attentive to the developmental imperatives of each age group. What works is starting with the young adolescent in a time of remarkable transition, not with a school structure, a curriculum, a schedule, or even a staff, starting with the young adolescent and having the respect and concern to fit the program to the person. If we want a population of young people who are developing as fully as possible, then we have to expand our definition of school reform to take into account the differences among elementary, middle and senior high school students, and therefore the necessary differences among schools at the elementary, middle and senior high levels.

Why involve parents, and what are some of the barriers and successes I have seen in including parents in fundamental school reform? If involving parents in school reform led to only marginal gains, I might be opposed to parent involvement efforts. Involving parents takes what appears to be an inordinate amount of time and energy in an already overloaded administrative day. Often, the very parents we want to involve cannot or will not participate, either because they also are overloaded or because they are disaffected, intimidated, or confused about their prospective role.

The administrators who resist reaching out to parents are not evil people. Many have no experience in working with parents in a collegial manner. They also may be disaffected, intimidated, or confused about any power they may be relinquishing, since they and not the parents are being held accountable for students' academic progress. They are skeptical about the cost-benefit ratio of adding another demanding requirement to their already overly demanding job.

So why involve parents in a program of fundamental school reform? Parents are critical to the academic well-being of their children. This is one of the few truths we know in education. This does not mean that if a parent is unavailable to a youngster that that child is doomed to failure. It does mean that schools have to go to extraordinary lengths to enable that child to achieve as well as peers who have parental support. In the cost-benefit ratio that should be, but often is not, in educators' heads, parent involvement is less costly than parent apathy.

Sometimes educators point out that as children approach and enter adolescence, and are separating from their parents, they urge their parents not to show up in school because they are embarrassed by their presence. All the more reason to involve parents of young adolescents in policy setting, several steps removed from classroom involvement. This is one of those fortunate convergences of sensible public policy and sensitive developmental responsiveness. We should remember that even if young adolescents do not want to acknowledge to their friends how important their parents are to them, they tell every researcher who asks that they continue to seek out their parents for counsel about decisions that have long-term consequences for their lives. Involving parents in planning for and assessing the progress of school reform is one way to shore up these ambivalent young people while building public support for schools.

I really want to underscore that point. I think we are in serious danger of losing our historic commitment to public education which was made in the early phases of this Republic.

If we are to put energy into rebuilding public support for public schooling in this country, we have to break down the isolation of the school from the community and expand and deepen the involvement of parents, along with other members of the community, in the school improvement process.

I want to underscore another point, which has to do with the comments I made about shoring up ambivalent and vulnerable young adolescents. The most successful schools I have observed are those which provide a set of coherent messages to their students about their value in the present and the importance of the work they are engaged in for their future aspirations. That coherence is difficult, not impossible, but difficult to achieve without the supporting and even identical messages coming from the home and from community agencies. When a school is lucky enough to be situated in a community that sends consistent messages to its children about the value of their education, about not dropping out and about aspiring to postsecondary schooling, its job is made much easier. But just as children cannot choose their parents, schools cannot choose their location. Unlike children, however, schools can decide to use their precious resources of time, energy and money to help create a more coherent community for youngsters it is their public trust to educate. They cannot do this without involving parents. Through the parents association with the school or school district, they become increasingly engaged in the school's mission, its struggles and its triumphs, and not only its failures. From what I have seen, familiarity does not breed contempt; distance does. Familiarity breeds attempt, the attempt to understand and then to help grapple with the truly difficult problems that schools are facing.

Now, Elaine Amerson talked about a middle grades improvement program that we have been helping to fund. I want to alert you to the fact that there is a very active one in Fort Wayne as well, involving eight middle schools in Fort Wayne. I don't want to talk more about that because she did already.

I do want to say it has not been an effortless process, either on the part of the parents or the schools, but I want to emphasize that even in this early stage—the planning grants began last January and implementation in some districts, ten of them, only a month ago—the role of the parents has been vital in expanding the dialogue within the planning group, in building support for the program in the community, and even in getting the planning process back on track when it appeared to be seriously derailed.

I would like, instead of taking any more time on that, to just alert you to another parent involvement program that has barely begun in Indiana, so that you can track its progress. The Lilly Endowment made a grant to the Indiana Department of Education to select 40 elementary schools across the state for a reading improvement project called REAP, Reading Excitement and Paperbacks. Decades of research and experimental programs tell us very important things about preventing reading failure, and they are very simple things. We have learned that children have to read in order to become better readers, that teachers have to encourage and give time for recreational reading, and that parent involvement increases children's reading. To support this activity, schools must have large collections of attractive, readable books. These lessons are incredibly simple and rarely employed. The REAP project will promote voluntary reading by children in grades four through six, combining well-developed motivational strategies for children, teachers, media specialists, and parents with ready access to large collections of high-interest reading materials.

I love this project because of the involvement of the students themselves and the parents in the planning, selection and implementation of it. I think it is going to lead to better readers across the state. I am also hopeful that the inclusion of parents from the outset will not only help make their children better readers, and thus better students in general, but will help set a pattern in the schools for including parents in other school efforts. Maybe "business as usual" can be redefined to include parents.

If I had hard data to give you, I would. The efforts I have described here are being subjected to intensive documentation and I hope to soon be able to be more definitive about that. I think that we are involved in a highly vigorous school change effort, one which involves collaborative efforts and especially the efforts of parents. I think there is every likelihood of improving schools via these efforts. I know we are all going to learn a lot in transit.

[Prepared statement of Joan Lipsitz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN LIPSITZ, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AT LILLY ENDOWMENT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, and staff members who have put so much time into preparing today's hearings, welcome to Indianapolis. My name is Joan Lipsitz. I am Program Director for Elementary and Secondary Education at the Lilly Endowment. Prior to my coming here close to two years ago, I was Director of the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill. I had the opportunity to testify in Washington before the Select Committee on October 27, 1983, when I was asked to give the Committee a statistical overview of the youth population and then to make some observations about the status of young people in the out-of-school hours. I entitled my testimony, "Making it the Hard Way: Adolescents in the 1980s," and I would be happy to provide you with copies of that testimony, should you wish me to, since today I am going to assume that the status of the adolescent age group is well known to the Committee members, and a review of numbers and trends would be redundant. Rather, I have been asked by the Committee to spend a bit of time with you looking at the role of parent participation in school reform, especially at the middle school or junior high level.

Before I make these remarks, I want to make sure that you understand my position as I take part in these hearings. As a staff member of a foundation, I am not in a position to lobby for any particular legislation. The views I am expressing are my personal views rather than those of the Lilly Endowment. I do not represent or speak for the Endowment. Nonetheless, my own expertise and training are what led the Endowment to ask for my advice and energies in helping to craft a school reform effort in Indiana. Therefore, I will be describing Lilly Endowment programs but will be in the awkward position of representing my own judgment and expertise and not the Endowment. I am sure that you appreciate and will respect the position that I am in, which is different from the one I was in when we last met.

I have been asked to address my comments to two questions, both of which are very important and both of which I am honored to be asked to discuss with you. First, what is so special about early adolescence that a reform effort specific to that age group is called for; and second, why involve parents—and what are the barriers and successes in doing so—in a substantive reform effort.

In the mid-1970s, I wrote a book about research and programs concerning young adolescents entitled Growing Up Forgotten. The title was appropriate then. Despite the proliferation of research and programs on behalf of very young children and older teen-agers, supported by public and private dollars, the early adolescent age group was virtually ignored. I was alarmed that such a critical time in the life span was being overlooked almost universally by policymakers and researchers alike.

There was cause for alarm. This is an especially vulnerable time in life, marked by dramatic physical, emotional, social, and intellectual changes. It is a challenge for adolescents to cope with so much internal disruption. To compound this challenge, many are asked to make a major change in their schooling at the very time when they are dealing with numerous dramatic internal changes. And, to make matters even more trying, adults begin to react differently to these young people as they start showing the physiological signs of puberty. Many adults, especially parents and teachers, feel unsettled by young adolescents, and the youngsters know this. Study after study tells us that young adolescents rely upon adults and not the peer group, if adults are available to reinforce values and set limits. These very adults often let early adolescents down, either by granting responsibility prematurely or suddenly clamping down out of fear with newly-imposed controls.

So, here we have an especially vulnerable group of youngsters whose task it is not only to integrate all the internal changes going on in their bodies and emotions but also, because of us, to deal with external changes in adults and even in the schools they attend. We did not plan this very well. I am not sure that we ask any other age group to deal with so much change simultaneously and so rapidly, not even the elderly. And we should be mindful of the fact that adolescence is a pivotal time in life, determining in large measure many of these young people's future options and their quality of life.

I do not think that this is an age group "growing up forgotten" any more. Several major foundations are devoting considerable resources to research and programs targeted to the early adolescent age group, a phenomenon I find both gratifying and also cause for concern. Too often these spurts of attention signal a funding fad which quickly ends when people want rapid results from their investments. One reason for the new attentiveness is instructive, however. Funding sources have learned from their grantees what should have been self-evident from the outset: young children do grow up, sometimes despite us, and their needs change and must be met. If we are to make good on the investment we make in the rearing and schooling of younger children, we must continue our efforts into early adolescence. Likewise, older adolescents have a personal history. They show up at the door of their senior high school with all the baggage, both positive and negative, that they have borne from their previous experiences in life. Funders have heard over and over again that efforts to stem the dropout tide or prevent premature pregnancies or substance abuse or any of the woes that young people are heir to come too late in the senior high years. And so, we are beginning to attend to the junior high or middle school years, not aggressively and consistently but sporadically, not because of major policy mandates but because pockets of interest, attentiveness, and energy are forming in selected agencies, school districts, and sometimes even in communities.

At the same time, I have noticed, as I suspect you have, that the major reform efforts are silent about the middle-school years. I am therefore concerned that we are in danger of doing what we usually do about early adolescence. We take what we know about high schools and move that knowledge down, as if it applied equally to this distinct group of young people.

Having given you this short background, I am more comfortable about answering the questions that the Committee put before me. A reform effort targeted to middle-level schools is required because the young people in them are neither elementary nor high school-age. They are young adolescents, with characteristics and needs of their own. If we talk generically about "school reform," we will once again overlook or "forget" about this pivotal time in schooling--and in life.

We also must be mindful that, particularly among poor and minority youngsters in less advantaged urban settings, the number of students who fail or fall desperately behind our expectations for school achievement seems to grow almost uncontrollably in the middle-school years. These young people fall farther and farther behind, until they either drop out or struggle in remedial programs throughout the rest of their school years. We cannot afford to be complacent about this dramatic failure in reading, writing, mathematics, or conceptual thinking, both because of the personal toll this failure takes, closing options before they have even opened, and because of the social and economic toll that results from a dead end reached so early in life.

I believe strongly, on the basis of experience as a teacher, as a researcher, as a consultant to schools, and now as foundation program director, that unless we insist upon attentiveness to young adolescents, their parents, the schools they are in, and the community resources available to them, they will continue to be inappropriately and even mindlessly folded into our efforts on behalf of older adolescents. We all want to know "what works." What works is being attentive to the developmental imperatives of each age group, not ignoring or denying them. What works is starting with the young adolescent in a time of remarkable transition, not with a school structure, a curriculum, a schedule, or even a staff, starting with the adolescent and having the respect and concern and decency to fit the program to the person. There are many procrustean beds around in this country--schools that try to fit the young adolescent to a senior high environment, no matter how stretched or compressed or warped the young adolescent must become to make the fit possible. If we want a stretched or compressed or warped population of young people, I suppose we could say that what many schools are doing "works." In fact, we say this tacitly, daily. But if we want a population of young people who are developing as fully as possible, who are able to blossom in their own remarkable and individual ways, then we have to expand our definition of school reform enough to take into account the differences among elementary, middle and senior high school students, and therefore the necessary differences among schools at the elementary, middle and senior high levels.

Your second question is equally challenging. Why involve parents, and what are some of the barriers and successes I have seen in including parents in fundamental school reform efforts? If involving parents in school reform led to only marginal gains, I would be opposed to parent involvement. Involving parents takes what appears to be an inordinate amount of time and energy in an already overloaded administrative day. It also costs money. Often, the very parents we want to involve cannot or will not participate, either because they also are overloaded or because they are disaffected, intimidated, or confused about their prospective role. The adminstrators who are being urged to reach out to parents are not evil people. They want to do the best job they can do. Many have no experience in working with parents in a collegial manner.

They also may be disaffected, intimidated, or confused about any power they may be relinquishing, since they and not the parents are being held accountable for students' academic progress. They are skeptical about the cost/benefit ratio of adding another demanding requirement to their already overly demanding job.

So, why involve parents in a program of fundamental school reform? Parents are essential to the academic well-being of their children. We hear this over and over, and perhaps it becomes tedious to hear it again, but it is one of the few truths we know in education. This does not mean that if a parent is unavailable to a youngster, that child is doomed to failure. It does mean that schools have to go to extraordinary lengths to enable that child to achieve as well as peers who have parental support. In the cost/benefit ratio that should be, but often is not, in educators' heads, parent involvement is less costly than parent apathy.

Sometimes educators point out that as children approach and enter adolescence and are separating from their parents, they urge their parents not to show up in school. They are embarrassed by their parents' presence. All the more reason to involve parents of young adolescents in policy setting, several steps removed from classroom involvement. This is one of those fortunate convergences of sensible public policy and sensitive developmental responsiveness. And we should remember that even if young adolescents do not want to acknowledge to their friends how important their parents are to them, they tell every investigator that they continue to seek out their parents for counsel about decisions that have long-term consequences for their lives. Involving parents in planning for and assessing the progress of school reform is one way to shore up these ambivalent young people while building public support for schools.

This is a point I want to underscore. We are in serious danger of losing the historic commitment to public education made in the earliest days of this republic. It is a remarkable commitment, and we should be mindful of the implications of its loss. If we are to put energy into rebuilding public support for public schooling in this country, we must break the isolation of the school from the community and expand and deepen the involvement of parents, along with other members of the community, in the school improvement process. Again, in the cost/benefit ratio, school administrators and other policy setters have to step back from the daily hassle of their positions and factor into the equation the cost of losing this historic commitment to schooling "youth from all quarters."

I want to underscore another point, which has to do with the comment I made about shoring up ambivalent and vulnerable young adolescents. We are all concerned about the school dropout rate, which remains stubbornly resistant to many of our intervention strategies. Decisions to drop out are often made earlier than we realize. A young person does not wake up on his or her sixteenth birthday and decide that it is time to leave school. We need well-organized early intervention programs to change the syndrome of failure and low aspirations that mires "at-risk" youngsters, often leading to early school-leaving. Parent involvement is essential. The most successful schools I have observed are those which provide a set of coherent messages to their students about their value in the present and the importance of the work they are engaged in for their future aspirations. That coherence is difficult--not impossible--but difficult to achieve without the supporting and even identical messages coming from the home and from community agencies. When a school is lucky enough to be situated in a community that sends consistent messages to its children about the value of their education, its job is made much easier. Unfortunately, many schools are not handed that kind of community on a silver platter. Just as children cannot choose their parents, schools cannot choose their location. But unlike children, schools can decide to use their precious resources of time, energy, and money to help create a more coherent community for the youngsters it is their public trust to educate. They cannot do this without involving parents so that, through their association with a school or a school district, they become increasingly engaged in the school's mission, its struggles and its triumphs, and not only its failures. From what I have seen, familiarity does not breed contempt; distance does. Familiarity breeds attempt, the attempt to understand and then to help grapple with the truly difficult problems that schools are facing.

In Indiana, we are just at the beginning of learning about involving parents in a middle-grades improvement program that challenges schools to rethink what they are doing and to plan for and implement significant change. We are interested in such areas as school-based self-assessment, the development of instructional leadership, the enhancement of reading opportunities and instruction, dropout prevention, increasing access to post-secondary education, and building public support for middle-grades schools. These efforts, supported by the Lilly Endowment, focus on the state's eight most populous areas, especially those with high concentrations of poor and minority youth. Because local solutions to local problems are demanded if schools are to improve, there are very few non-negotiables in these school improvement grants. One, however, is that parents and other community representatives be an integral part of the planning and implementation of locally-determined reform efforts. I cannot tell you that this has been an effortless process, either on the part of the parents or the schools. I can tell you, however, that even at this early date (the planning process began this past January, and some schools began their implementation efforts last month), the role of parents has been important in expanding the dialogue within the planning group, in building support for the program in the community, and even in getting a planning process back on track when it appeared to be hopelessly derailed. I would be happy to discuss further our experiences to date, should you wish me to. They reflect all of the strengths and the barriers I referred to a few moments ago.

I want to alert you to another parent involvement program that has barely begun in Indiana, so that you can track its progress. The Lilly Endowment made a grant to the Indiana Department of Education to select 40 elementary schools across the state for a reading improvement project called REAP: Reading Excitement and Paperbacks. The program concentrates on the upper elementary grades. Rates of reading failure usually begin to increase at grade four and are found disproportionately in low-income children and schools with high percentages of poor and minority children. Decades of research and experimental programs afford us important lessons about preventing reading failure and instilling the basis for a lifelong habit of reading. For instance, we have learned that children must read in order to become better readers, that teachers must encourage and must give time for recreational reading, and that parent involvement increases children's reading. To support this activity, schools must have large collections of attractive, readable books. These lessons are simple but rarely employed. The REAP project will promote voluntary reading by children in grades four through six, combining well-developed motivational strategies for children, teachers, media specialists, and parents with ready access to large collections of high-interest reading materials. I think that this project will generate the excitement and enthusiasm about reading that can open new worlds of information and pleasure to thousands of children in the state. I also am quite sure that the inclusion of parents in this project from the outset will not only help make their children better readers and thus better students in general, but will help set a pattern for including parents in other school efforts. Perhaps "business as usual" will be redefined to include parents. Thus, I am as interested in the process of this effort as in its stated intent.

If I had hard data to give you, I would. The efforts I have described are being subjected to intensive documentation, and I hope to be able to be more definitive about results in the future than I can be today. The school districts engaged in the Middle Grades Improvement Program and the schools involved in the REAP project are engaged in an exploration, and a highly vigorous one, which involves collaborative efforts for constructive change. I think there is every likelihood of improving schools via these efforts. I know we will all learn a lot in transit.

Thank you.

Mr. COATS. Thank you very much, Joan.

Our next witness is Izona Warner with Parents In Touch, Indianapolis.

STATEMENT OF IZONA WARNER, PARENTS IN TOUCH, INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Ms. WARNER. First I want to thank you for bringing the hearing to Indianapolis, so that we could use it as a pre-conference activity for our MAPP conference. We are having a large group of people participate in the conference and we are glad to be able to give them the opportunity to appear for the hearing.

I must also apologize for the fact that you do not have a written statement from me as yet, but I promise that you will get one.

Mr. COATS. We promise to put it in the record.

Ms. WARNER. We have been working on the conference and it was just impossible to do both.

Mr. COATS. We're just glad you're here. We'll make sure it gets in the record.

Ms. WARNER. I have been asked to describe the Parents In Touch program, which has been in effect since 1979. When we started the program in 1979, we had a large grant from the Lilly Endowment and were able to do a lot of things that we are not continuing to do now because of the fact that we do not have the funds we had initially. However, the first project that we started enabled us to do a media blitz to get the word out across the community that IPS does want parent involvement. We had billboards, we had paid TV during prime time, a lot of things that called parents attention to the fact that IPS is reaching out and saying we want our parents to participate in parent/teacher conferences. We saw the parent/teacher conference as a way for parents and teachers to get together at the end of the first six weeks grading period and share expectations. The parents were to share what kinds of things they knew about their children that would be helpful to the teacher, and also kind of set a standard on what they were expecting for their children. At the same time, teachers were saying this is what I'm going to give your child and this is how I expect you to participate and cooperate with me.

We trained our teachers prior to the conferences on how to communicate. It sounds very simple, but I think what happens is sometimes we are so concerned about the problems that exist that we forget to accentuate the positive things with our parents when they come in for conferences. Parents are always being told or contacted when there's a problem, and now we're asking our teachers to really meet them early on in the school year before there are problems and talk about all of the positive things that can happen as a result of the two of you working together.

This, we think, has been very successful. The in-service for teachers, we know that there is more understanding and more interest in having parents involved now. The first year that we had the conference we had only 52 percent of our elementary school parents participate in conferences. In the last years, we have had 80 percent of the parents of elementary students participating in parent/teacher conferences. This means that teachers make an effort to really reach those parents. Sometimes they come in early in the morning, they stay late in the evening, and they have even made home visits in order to contact the parents to see that they have the contact at the end of that first six weeks period.

We provide the parents who come to the conference with activity calendars that can be used on a daily basis with activities that they can use at the home in working with their children. Also in that calendar we list some of the basic skills that are expected to be achieved during the school year, so that parents know what the school's expectations for their children are.

We provide a contract that the teacher talks about the parent with at the time of that conference. It sets expectations for the parent, saying that I will see that my child attends school regularly; I will try to see that he or she is there on time, I will keep in touch with the school on a regular basis, those kinds of things that we hope are understood. Just by talking with the teacher about them at the time of the conference, we hope that we're really setting a standard that can be maintained throughout the school year.

We have a homework folder that goes home and goes along with that contract, in which the parent is saying I am going to work with my child on homework, and the folder goes back on a weekly basis and the parent and teacher can communicate through the use of that folder what is happening on a weekly basis with that child in the classroom. So there is some communication not only at the time of the conference, but throughout the school year.

As a part of the Parents In Touch program, we also have a direct teacher homework hotline. Parents as well as students use that line to call in and get assistance. Parents are sometimes working with their child in relation to their homework. The jargon is different and the techniques or the way of arriving at an answer may be different. We are hoping that throughout homework hotline parents get help in helping their children, as well as the children getting help with their homework.

We have a parent line communicator which is a telephone hotline for anyone in the community really. We have a list of taped topics and parents, students, or others in the community can call and get information about the school, about any kind of service that's available within the school, and then, in addition, on that line we have drug and alcohol abuse tapes that will give information to parents and/or students who want information. That is a direct dial system and is available 24 hours a day.

We have worked very hard with our community agencies in identifying agencies or people within agencies who will give workshops for our parents. We feel that parent education is very important. We know that when parents get together in small groups and begin to talk about some of their concerns and interests, it becomes a situation where the isolation that you may feel as a parent who is dealing with certain problems with your children, you find that you are not alone, that other people are dealing with the same kinds of things. That makes it much more palatable in dealing with it, because of the fact there is a shared concern.

We have a lot of other programs. I won't take up all of your time. I do want to say that we have done some leadership training for parents. We have parents in IPS who are involved in a lot of the committees and task forces that are working to improve things within the system. Some of these parents have come as a result of our leadership training efforts. Last summer we involved not only teachers in our leadership training but parents as well. They work together to look at where we should be going in schools with parent involvement. The more we bring these two groups together, and the more the realize that they have common concerns, we feel the better our results will be in the end. Because all we're doing in terms of parent involvement is looking toward increased achievement, better attendance, and improved school adjustment.

Thank you.

Mr. COATS. Thank you very much.

Mary Jackson Willis.

STATEMENT OF MARY JACKSON WILLIS, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL COUNCIL ASSISTANCE PROJECT, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, COLUMBIA, SC

Ms. WILLIS. Thank you for having this hearing. We need to do this once a week.

I have a couple of comments to make about what our state has learned about parent involvement, and I will try to keep this brief. I have given you a lot of detail there in my written statement.

Parent involvement in South Carolina, up until 1977, included very important but more traditional forms parent involvement, such as the PTAs and the PTOs, those booster clubs, homeroom mothers, and the annual open house. South Carolina began to change its view of parent involvement in 1977 by mandating school advisory councils in every school in our state. This mandate was a formal means of providing more local accountability in academic programs as well as planning.

The last ten years have yielded some revealing data and some unique experiences. The most important lesson that has been learned is that more parent involvement, not less, is a necessary prerequisite to any serious reform effort that hopes to achieve meaningful and lasting educational improvement for all children.

It seems that the key to success in any parent involvement initiative is the motive behind the initiative. If public policy on parent involvement is directed towards improved student outcomes rather than public relations or mechanistic attempts to simply make parents better parents, then that policy is more likely to yield results that are meaningful for all children, regardless of their sex, race or socio-economic status.

I have entitled my written statement as "Ten Years of Mandates in South Carolina, Overcoming Obstacles." Let me begin by saying that my training and experience have led me to conclude that the degree to which this country successfully educates its children is related to its social and economic productivity. Our state, which is facing ending this century where it began, the poorest state in the country, cannot afford to sit back and not do anything. So, in 1977, we saw the handwriting on the wall.

Further, there is no evidence that I or my colleagues in higher education can produce that says that schools can manage or sustain excellence in education without the support of parents and the community.

Indeed, just the opposite is true. Where schools have managed to bring all children to high levels of achievement and to sustain such outcomes over time, there is evidence of parent-initiated support at home or parent involvement at the school. Schools, of course, may differ in their formulas for parent involvement, or the structure of such involvement, but the presence of parents, either physically at that school or at home, plodding away in some school-related capacity, is always there. In some instances, schools may never even be aware of certain forms of parent involvement or extended family support.

I think the evidence is clear. In Anne Henderson's recent publication entitled "The Evidence Continues to Grow-Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement"; she goes on to say there are a variety of roles that parents can play, but three things must be there. First of all, that parent involvement must be well planned, comprehensive, and long lasting, and that, indeed, has been South Carolina's experience. The facts are that schools have not, cannot, and will not be able to educate children well without parents. It is also a fact that most schools, especially high schools, still persist in trying to prove the facts wrong.

Therefore, I would suggest that the missing link in education reform is not so much parent involvement but the lack of formal state or national policy to give parent involvement proper recognition and funding as a specific research-based strategy for school improvement. You see, the pedagogy for parent involvement is in place; the politics are not.

I believe that South Carolina has made a serious attempt to set policy and pass formal legislation that gives parents and lay citizens a meaningful role in educational reform. It has taken more than ten years to make it happen. We surely are not perfect. There are many road blocks that have appeared along the way. But our journey has been steady, persistent and successful by any number of measures. Let me share with you what I believe are some of the promises and pitfalls of that journey.

Our effort to involve parents primarily started with the need to look at the financing of public schools. So, in 1977, we did mandate that every school would have an elected school advisory council. Parents were required to be elected to those councils, as well as teachers and other constituents that represent the school.

A number of significant accomplishments and key obstacles of these school councils were identified in a study that was published in 1980. The results I have summarized for you and I would like to share with you quickly some of those results.

It is important to note that the accomplishments of these mandated school councils tended to validate the legislature's intent. School councils were improving communications between schools and parents. They were setting meaningful improvement goals by impacting the curriculum and discipline; and they initiated new approaches for communicating with the community and with the school board.

The obstacles tended to be more administrative in nature and appeared to reflect the heavy bureaucracy that most schools operate within. There was evidence of top down management and a lack of leadership from school professionals when faced with a participatory model of school improvement. There was also a general misunderstanding of what the role of the council was to be, both from professional educators as well as the parents. However, the good has far outweighed the bad.

In 1984, I believe South Carolina passed the most impressive education reform act in this country—and maybe when we hear from our friend from Arkansas, she can debate me on that. But it seems that one of the things we had to do to improve the parent involvement component that was started in 1977 was to strengthen the role of those school councils by providing new incentives to schools to improve and also requiring parent involvement up and down the organization.

The law changed the names of councils from school advisory to school improvement councils. The name change sought to symbolically redirect the councils away from the mechanistic giving of advice to a more active role of creating school improvement. With the name change came a requirement that councils would use the Effective Schools Research as a blueprint for their school improvement plan. The plan would now focus on student outcomes such as improved student achievement and attendance, not only for students but for teachers. It's amazing how researchers can help when we learned that kids tend to do better when they're in school than when they're not in school, and that very clear point—that they tend to do better when their teachers are in school, too. So we need to keep doing research.

We also tended to look at things to reduce the dropout rate. Our state now faces losing one-fourth of all 9th graders who begin school. We cannot in our state keep going forward with such statistics. The school improvement councils are also required to give advice on some $4 million worth of school incentive awards. They are given to the schools who show significant achievement over time. You see, schools are rewarded when they manage to improve. Other state and Federal models tend to simply take money away from schools, and I will show that the Chapter 1 program is a good example. We fund those programs to help kids, and as soon as the schools manage to get them on track, the funds are taken away. So our state saw the need to provide incentives and that parent involvement had to be part of that. So the school incentive awards are now part of what our state is doing and our school councils must give advice on how the money is to be spent. Indeed, they are to sign off on the budget. That may seem like a small thing, but it is symbolic in some ways and an important piece.

Finally, the state also funds the training and technical assistance that these school councils receive, which is where I spend most of my time and energy. Having directed the School Council Assistance Project now and worked with it for almost ten years, we have learned a lot about how technical assistance can move schools away from places of mediocrity into places of excellence.

My office is a unique example of collaboration between higher education and K through 12 public schools. The Project has no regulatory function over councils. Because we do not regulate or monitor these councils, there is an atmosphere of trust and acceptance that might not be achieved if we held statutory authority to sanction or determine compliance. Such authority is reserved to our State Department of Education, as it well should be.

Our EIA goes much further to promote parent involvement than simply strengthening the role of school councils. There is an entire section of the law that targets parent involvement in one or more ways—and I have given you a sample of that as an attachment to my written statement. In fact, it is entitled "Creating More Effective Partnerships Among the Schools, Parents, Community and Business."

I don't believe there is another state in the country that has attempted such innovative reforms as those outlined here.

Let me summarize for you what I believe are the major barriers and what might be done to overcome them. I would hope that Congress would use our state's experiences and bold initiatives to construct a new vision for parent involvement at the Federal level. It may sound like a cliche, but if a poor state like South Carolina can manage such reforms, then any state could. Our efforts to involve parents in more meaningful ways include three very important ingredients:

First, school improvement forms the basis of parent involvement. Improved student outcomes is the primary goal of our state's reform efforts. Mandated parent representation on councils through election provides for legitimate collaboration between the schools by making parents full partners in the process.

Next, training and technical assistance is provided for parents and school professionals. The training is independent of any regulatory function and is directly available to any parent who requests it. Mandates were not enacted without proper technical assistance because we have learned in the past that simply asking people to do things, in a state where if we knew how to do it we would already have been doing it, probably wasn't going to happen.

Another point I would like to share with you here is that schools are rewarded and recognized for attempting to improve. I think that has to include parents. You see, our efforts have been put on catching schools doing things right and rewarding them, rather than focusing on the fact that many of our schools have been unable to manage a number of reform efforts.

I am going to stop there because I think there are other people that need to finish and say their thoughts. But I want to thank you for allowing me to share with you today these things. I applaud your interest and hope that the facts that support the need for more parent involvement in public schools will overcome the folklore that has in the past created the unnecessary barriers for parents, and I believe has retarded this country's efforts for excellence in public education.

[Prepared statement of Mary Jackson Willis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY JACKSON WILLIS, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL COUNCIL ASSISTANCE PROJECT, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, COLUMBIA, SC

The attached statement and related material provide insight into South Carolina's struggle to invlolve parents and the community at large in public education.

Parent involvement in South Carolina up until 1977 included the important, but more traditional, forms of parent involvement such as PTA/PTO's, Booster Clubs, Homeroom Mothers and the annual "Open House." South Carolina began to change its view of parent involvement in 1977 by mandating School Advisory Councils in every school (K-12) as a formal means of providing more local accountability in academic programs and planning.

The last ten years have yielded some revealing data and unique experiences that I have summarized for the Committee to consider. The most important lesson that has been learned is that MORE parent involvement, not less, is a necessary prerequisite to any serious reform effort that hopes to achieve meaningful and lasting educational improvement for all children.

It seems that the key to success in any parent involvement initiative is the "motive behind" the initiative. If public policy on parent involvement is directed toward "improved student outcomes" rather than public relations or mechanistic attempts to "make parents better parents", then that policy is more likely to yield results that are meaningful for all children, regardless of sex, race or socio-economic status.

The University of South Carolina: USC Aiken; USC Salkehatchie, Allendale; USC Beaufort; USC Columbia; Coastal Carolina College, Conway; USC Lancaster; USC Spartanburg; USC Sumter; USC Union; and the Military Campus.

Parents: The Missing Link in Education Reform
Overcoming Obstacles: Ten Years of Mandates in S.C.

I would like to thank Congressman Miller and other memebers of the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families for holding this hearing in conjunction with the Project MAPP Conference here in Indianapolis.

Let me begin by saying that my training and experience have led me to conclude that the degree to which this country successfully educates its children is directly related to our economic and social productivity. Further, there is no substantive evidence that I or my colleagues in higher education can produce that says that schools can manage and sustain excellence in education without the support of parents and the community.

Indeed, just the opposite is true. Where schools have managed to bring all children to high levels of achievement and to sustain such outcomes over time, there is evidence of parent initiated support at home and/or parent involvement at the school. Schools may differ in their formulas for parent involvement and the structure of such involvement, but the presence of parents either physically at the school or at home plodding away in some school-related capacity is always there. In some instances, schools may never be aware of certain forms of parent or "extended-family" suppport.

Anne Henderson's 1987 bibliography titled, The Evidence Continues to Grow-Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement, does tell us that there is no one best way to go about it. Instead, it says that what works is for parents to be involved in a variety of roles over a period of time. The form of parent involvement does not seem to be as important as that it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting.

The facts are that schools have not, cannot and will not be able to educate children as well without parents as they can with parents. It is also a fact that most schools, especially high schools, still persist in trying to prove the facts wrong.

Therefore, I would suggest that the missing link in education reform is not so much "parent involvement", but the lack of formal state or national policy to give parent involvement proper recognition and funding as a specific research-based strategy for school improvement. The pedagogy for parent involvement is in place, the politics are not.

I believe that South Carolina has made a serious attempt to set policy and pass formal legislation that gives parents and lay citizens a meaningful role in education reform. It has taken more than ten years to make it happen. We are surely not perfect and many "road blocks" have appeared along the way. But our journey has been steady, persistent and successful by any number of measures. In the few remaining minutes, I would like to share both the promises and pitfalls of that journey with the committee.

South Carolina's legislative efforts to involve parents in formal ways began with the Education Finance Act of 1977 and have continued with the Education Improvement Act of 1984. Both acts represent major reforms in education and both include statewide mandates for parent involvement at all levels of the educational process.

I have provided the committee a ten year summary of the legislative efforts of my state found on page six (6). I will briefly review those efforts to give you a sense of how things evolved.

The state wanted more local accountability. Lawmakers wanted to put the "public" back into the public schools by providing a formal, legitimate role for collaboration at the school building level.

A number of significant accomplishments and key obstacles of School Advisory Councils were identified as a result of a statewide study conducted in 1980. The results are summarized on page seven (7).

It is important to note that the accomplishments of the school councils tended to validate the legislature's intent. School Councils were improving communications between schools and parents; they were setting meaningful improvement goals by impacting curriculum, discipline, and initiating new approaches for communicating with the community at large and the school board.

The obstacles tended to be more "administrative" in nature and appeared to reflect the heavy bureaucracy that most schools operate within. There was evidence of "top down" management and a lack of leadership from school professionals when faced with a participatory model of school improvement. There was also a general "misunderstanding" of the role of councils both on the part of professional educators and from parents. However, the good far out-weighed the bad.

The Education Improvement Act of 1984 sought to strengthen the role of school councils and provided new incentives for schools to improve that required more parent involvement up and down the organization.

The law changed the name of councils from School Advisory to School Improvement Councils. The name change sought to symbolically redirect the councils away from the mechanistic giving of advice to a more active role of creating school improvement. With the name change came a requirement that councils would use the Effective Schools Research as a blueprint for the School Improvement Plan. The Plan would now focus on student outcomes such as improved achievement, attendance, reducing the drop-out rate and maintaining an all clear accreditation status.

The School Improvement Council is also required to give advice on the use of nearly four million dollars of School Incentive Awards which are given to schools that show signigicant achievement gains over time.

Schools are rewarded when they manage to improve student performance. Other state and federal models provide more money for certain students only when they are below grade level, then take those funds away when the school significantly improves student performance.

The S.C. School Incentive Program seeks to further reward and recognize schools when they are able to improve. South Carolina schools are given the extra funds they need to get all children up to standard and are further rewarded by School Incentive funds when the school meets with continued success.

The School Councils must be involved in spending decisions and "sign-off" on the budget associated with the School Incentive Awards before it goes to the local board for review. Since this program was enacted, about one fourth of the schools in the state have been rewarded each year with these funds.

Finally, the state also funds a training and technical assistance project through the EIA to provide direct on-site training and services to School Improvement Councils statewide. The School Council Assistance Project, which I direct, provides the training, conducts research and development initiatives related to councils and provides a variety of computer related services that institutions of higher education can typically best provide. My office is a unique example of collaboration between higher education and K-12 public schools.

The Project has no regulatory function over councils. Because we do not regulate or monitor the councils, there is an atmosphere of trust and acceptance that might not be achieved if we also held statutory authority to sanction or determine compliance. Such authority is reserved to the State Department of Education.

The EIA goes much further to promote parent involvement than the strengthening of school councils. An entire section of the law targets parent involvement in one or more ways. Subdivision F, is titled "Creating More Effective Partnerships Among the Schools, Parents, Community and Business" - see excerpts on page eight (8).

There is no other state in the country that has attempted such innovative reforms as those outlined in this section of the EIA.

Summary

I would hope that Congress would use our state's experiences and bold iniatives to construct a new vision for parent involvement at the federal level. It may sound like a cliche, but if a poor state like South Carolina can manage such reforms then any state could. Our efforts to involve parents in more meaningful ways include three very important ingredients:

(1) School Improvement Forms the Basis of Parent Involvement.

"Improved Student Outcomes" is the primary goal of our state's reform efforts. State laws recognize parents as a necessary ingredient for improvement; not something you do last or only if there are funds. Mandated parent representation on councils through election provides for legitimate collaboration for school improvement by making parents full partners in the process.

(2) Training and Technical Assistance is Provided for Parents and School Professionals. The training is independent of any regulatory function and directly available to any parent who requests help.

Mandates were not enacted without proper technical assistance to ensure access to information, research and development and the necessary data to see that parents, teachers and administrators are successful when attempting to improve their schools.

(3) Schools are Rewarded and Recognized for Attempting to Improve by Including Parents.

Because of a variety of programs, the risk of improvement far outweighs "business as usual." Parents are specifically included in such recognition efforts. The idea behind the legislation is to "catch people doing things right."

Thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts with you today. I applaud your interest and would hope that the facts that support the need for more parent involvement in public schools will finally overcome the "folklore" that has in the past created uncessary barriers for parents and retarded this country's efforts for excellence in public education.

Mary Jackson Willis, Director
The School Council Assistance Project
College of Education
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

(803) 777-7658

Ten Year Summary of Parent Involvement Legislation in South Carolina

1977 South Carolina General Assembly passes the Education Fianance Act (EFA) that establishes a system of state fianacial aid that recognizes local financial ability and upgrades educational opportunities for every child in the state to at least standards expressed by the State Board of Education's Defined Minimum Program.

Section 6 requires that ".....each school board of trustees shall establish an advisoy council at each school in the district composed of at least two parents elected by the parents of the children enrolled in the school; at least two teachers elected by the faculty; at least two students in schools with grades 9 and above; other representatives of the community and persons selected by the principal; provided, however, that the elected members comprise at least a two-thirds majority of the membership of the committee."

"....Each council shall assist in the preparation of the Annual School Report required in this section and shall provide such assistance as the principal may request as well as carrying out any other duties prescribed by the local school board. The local board will make provisions to allow the council to file a separate report to the local board if the council deems it necessary. However, no council shall have any powers or duties reserved by law or regulation to the local school board."

"....An Annual School Report Summary shall be distributed to the parents of the children enrolled in the school no later than September 30th of each year."

1980 The EFA was ammended to require that a Summary of the Annual School Report be sent to the State Department of Education for compliance review. (Establish formal communications link between state education regulatory agency and local schools.)

1983 The EFA was ammended to allow all elected council members to serve at least a two year term;

that the names and addresses of the council members must be forwarded within 30 days of the election or appointment to the State Department of Education for the purpose of sharing information;

that the local district must report training opportunities provided or to be provided for school advisory council members and professional educators in regard to council-related tasks to the State Department of Education including a summary of programs and activities involving parents and citizens in the schools.

1984 The passage of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) strengthened the role of school councils by:

(1) changing the name to School Improvement Councils thereby changing the focus from merely the giving of advice to school improvememnt.

(2) requiring that the "....written report become a school improvement report; and that the report focus on factors found by research to be effective in improving schools." (Required use of Effective School Correlates as one part of a mandated needs assessment at every school.)

(3) required staggered terms of council service and sufficient length (2 years) to maintain continuity, stability of membership and to allow for members to master their role.

(4) provided for and funded the training of councils : ".....The State Board of Education acting through the existing School Council Assistance Project at the University of South Carolina, shall provide services and training activities to support school improvement councils and their efforts in preparing an annual school improvement report as required in this section."

(5) created a School Incentive Fund to reward and recognize schools for exceptional performance for such criteria as: (a) achievement gains over prior years; (b) improved student attendance; (c) improved teacher attendance; (d) improved student attitudes toward learning; (e) improved parent participation; and (f) such other factors promoting or maintaining high level of achievement.

No school or school district is eligible for incentive grant funds unless the achievement gain criteria is met.

(6) School Improvement Councils must provide advice on the use of the school incentive funds.

1984 Passage of Education Improvement Act which includes three subparts of law specifically directed towards "Creating More Effective Partnerships Among the Schools, Parents, Community and Business." (See page 8 for actual excerpts from EIA.)

1987 Proviso's in budget bill clarified the state's commitment to training for School Improvement Councils and the need for research and development to continue at the university level to further enhance future training of councils in South Carolina.

1987 Critical Issues in EIA Budget Deliberations for 1988-89: cited need for increased funding for assistance to School Improvement Councils, expansion of parenting classes and restoration of cuts made to School Incentive Program.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS IN S.C.

- Improved school/community relations and communications
- Increased parent involvement
- Increased input into setting goals and program objectives
- Looked at total program, including success of surveys
- Improved programs such as kindergarten, tardiness, discipline, curriculum, grading, principal selection, and library.
- Improved facilities and equipmemt
- Improved communications with local school board
- Others: initiated curriculum handbook for parents; slide presentations on the school; incentive grant program begun; PTA started or increased membership; created formal liason between school levels; published school budget.

KEY OBSTACLES OF SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- Lack of understanding of council's role or function
- Lack of time or selecting time when convenient for all to meet
- Feeling that principal and administration are not supportive -too much emphasis on 'don'ts"
- Lack of communication with school board, either by no face-to face contact or no response to Annual School Report
- Lack of funding for goals
- Lack of continunity - need for bigger council and 2 year terms
- Annual School Report too involved - too much paperwork
- Difficulty of understanding total school program
- Others: No expense money/clerical support; lack of leadership apathy; keeping on track, personal problems instead of looking at the school overall; no sign-off procedure to ensure council's approval of report; not enough attention to Vocational needs; unannounced meetings; restrictions placed on Annual School Report goals because of funding.

Taken from: A Status Report on the Implementation of Section #6 of the Education Finance Act of 1977, Sovde, J. E., Education Finance Review Committee, April 1980.

South Carolina Legislation to Promote Parent Involvement

SubPart 1
Strengthening the Involvement of Parents in their Children's Education

Section 59-5-65. The State Board of Education shall have the power and responsibility to:
Adopt policies and procedures for the local districts whereby:

(a) Regular conferences between parents and teachers are encouraged.
(b) Each school has active parent and teacher participation on the School Improvement Council and in parent-teacher groups.
(c) Parenting classes and seminars are made readily available in every school district.

SubPart 2
Increasing the Participation of Business and Industry in the Public Schools

"Section 59-5-65. The State Board shall have the power and responsibility to:
Adopt policies and procedures to accomplish the following:

(a) Have school personnel encourage advice and suggestions from the business community
(b) Have business organizations encourage their members to become involved in efforts to strengthen the public schools.
(c) Encourage all schools and businesses to participate in adopt-a-school programs.
(d) Encourage statewide businesses and their organizations to initiate a Public Education Foundation to fund exemplary and innovative projects which support improvement in the public schools.

SubPart 3
Broadening the Community Involvement in Public Schools

"Section 59-5-65. The State Board shall have the power and responsibility to:
Adopt policies and procedures to accomplish the following:

(a) Expand school volunteer programs.
(b) Encourage civic and professional organizations to participate in local adopt-a-school programs."

The State Board of Education shall initiate an award program to recognize business and industries, civic organizations, school improvement councils, and individuals contributing most significantly to public education.

Mr. **Coats**. Thank you.

We will now hear from the State of Arkansas, Ann Kamps.

STATEMENT OF ANN W. KAMPS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE FIRST LADY, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS, LITTLE ROCK, AR

Ms. **Kamps**. I would never debate any sort of education reform. I'm just glad that it happens.

Arkansas does join South Carolina as being a poor, southern state. Unfortunately, we have our share of disadvantaged children whose parents don't foresee anything better for them than the life they have now. So we are trying to do something about that.

Positive learning experiences for children don't just happen. They are the result of planning, commitment, and determination by dedicated teachers, school officials and parents. Years before children begin formal school activities they could experience the joy of learning at home through a variety of informal education opportunities. Parents could help set the stage for success during the future school years. But too many children during their pre-school years do not have the stimulating opportunity to learn what many children take for granted. As a result, these children begin their school with educational disadvantages. They are behind their peers in learning experiences at the start, and many of these children never catch up.

This is the beginning of the dropout problem that we're facing in Arkansas. A home-based educational program that involves the mothers of four- and five-year-old children is needed to prepare educationally disadvantaged children for success in school. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, or HIPPY, is a model that is making a significant impact in the area of preschool education.

The HIPPY program was developed at the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education, at Hebrew University in Israel by Dr. Avima Lombard. HIPPY has a track record of proven success in Israel, but it is virtually unknown in this country. The program is designed to ensure success for the child and for the mother. Most parents in HIPPY feel an immediate sense of accomplishment and gratification because they know they have been presented good, creative, and educationally-sound material to their children as a foundation for learning in school.

HIPPY came to America in 1982 virtually unchanged from its structure in Israel. Mothers of four- and five-year-old children are required to sign a contract to work with their children for 15 minutes a day, five days a week, 30 weeks a year, for two years, the second year being while the child is in kindergarten. The mother is instructed in the material to be used through role playing, so that even parents with very limited reading skills can still participate. The mother is trained by a paraprofessional who also has a four year old and who comes from the same community. I want to stress that. These are not teachers, these are not community leaders. These are women who live in housing projects or in the communities with these mothers. We feel that is very important, that they can bond together and understand and immediately relate to each other's needs.

Twice a month the home visitor visits the parent in the home and works with her on weekly lessons. On alternating weeks, the mothers gather for group meetings where they will not only work with their aide to learn the next week's instruction, but will also have an opportunity to visit with other mothers, share their experiences, and talk about their problems.

Because of its success, HIPPY is proving itself an exceptionally strong program in Arkansas and is experiencing rapid growth. During its brief history to date in Arkansas, it has excited educators and community leaders alike. In two years, it has grown from four pilot programs to ten state-wide programs that stretch from the Oklahoma line to the Mississippi Delta, to the Louisiana border.

It is important to understand that five of our ten programs come directly from school districts. The other five come from community-based organizations, so we are not tied to the school district. I must say from the beginning that HIPPY is not a state-funded program. There is no state money involved. In Arkansas, unfortunately, we've had to get "blood from a turnip".

From the beginning, it was apparent that individual districts or agencies would not have the amount of money that it would take to develop and administer this program. While initially we received some private foundation money as part of our first year operations, far more money was needed. As we studied the program, however, we came to a greater appreciation of the effect on the mothers. In doing so, we recognized the connection with adult education in literacy and therefore have been able to secure large amounts of money from Job Training Partnership Act administrative entities. By working closely with the Arkansas State Department of Education and local school districts, we have been able to utilize Chapter I and Chapter II funds. We also have received commitments from school boards for direct financial aid over and above their in-kind contributions.

In our small towns throughout the state HIPPY has become a community effort. Literacy councils, adult education, Head Start, Save the Children, and community-based action committees have come together to see the program through. For us in Arkansas, HIPPY has become a labor of love. The results are beginning to come in as our second year begins, and our first wave of 5 year old HIPPY children are in kindergarten. The children are bright-eyed and eager learners and their teachers are excitedly reporting their achievements. One teacher said she can pick out a HIPPY child a mile away. But one mother's comment from College Station, AR sums it up. "I enjoy the instruction and assistance that your school has provided for my child. Thanks to the HIPPY program, my child has great knowledge."

Many education planners in Arkansas now believe that HIPPY will have a potent and positive impact on dropout prevention and will optimize parent involvement in education in the public schools. Given a chance, this program may help motivate parents to break the cycle of poverty, welfare, despondency and dependency. By improving the lives of two generations, much can be accomplished through this unique approach for home instruction for preschool children.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Ann W. Kamps follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANN W. KAMPS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, STATE OF ARKANSAS, LITTLE ROCK, AR

The realization that parents are an integral part of their children's education has been slow to develop. Today, however, there remains little doubt that parent involvement greatly improves the child's academic and social success at school and throughout his life. For the "at risk" child, or the child who comes from a home in which the parents have had unsuccessful educational experiences and probably not finished high school themselves, a good education is a very difficult achievement. There is a good possibility that child will not complete school at all. While dropout rates vary from state to state, the national average is widely recognized to be between 14 and 25 percent. The General Accounting Office estimates that dropouts will be 60 percent less likely to be employed than graduates. In Arkansas, we want to improve on those statistics. Even more, we want to improve the chances of our youngest citizens to reach their potential and recognize their own abilities.

One of the ways we have chosen to address this dilemma is to introduce the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). HIPPY is a home-based program for the educational enrichment of disadvantaged preschool children and the promotion of increased awareness by their parents of their own strengths, potential, and importance as their children's first and primary teacher. HIPPY is, also, a parent education program designed to change the attitudes of parents as it helps them recognize their responsibilities to their children. Some parents believe that it is the responsibility of the school system to educate their children and theirs alone. More often, we have found in Arkansas that parents would work with their children if they knew how and if they felt comfortable doing it. One mother's thoughts echoed the fears of many when she told us that she always knew she could feed and care for her child, but she never tried to "teach" him anything because she was too uneducated herself and was afraid that anything she said or did would be damaging to him. Through HIPPY, we are able to help her be the teacher she wanted to be.

The Home Instruction Program was developed in 1969 at the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education, at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel by a team headed by Dr. Avima D. Lombard. Initiated as a research project, it was designed to examine the feasibility and effect of home-based educational intervention involving mothers and their preschool children from educationally disadvantaged sectors of the country. In 1975, the project passed from the research phase to the operational phase on a country-wide basis, and today, almost twenty years later, serves approximately 13,000 families yearly in over 110 urban and rural communities. While it is funded by the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, Hebrew University maintains control over the implementation and coordination of the program.

HIPPY came to America in 1982 virtually unchanged. Mothers of four year old children are required to work with their children fifteen minutes a day, five days a week, thirty weeks a year, for two years, the second year being while the child is in kindergarten. The mother is instructed in the material to be used through role playing, so that even parents with very limited reading skills can still participate. She is trained by a paraprofessional who also has a four year old child and comes from the same community. Twice a month, the aide visits the parent in the home and works with her on the weekly lessons. On alternating weeks, the mothers gather for group meetings where they will not only work with their aide to learn the next week's instruction, but will also have an opportunity to visit with other mothers, share their experiences, talk about their problems, and have an enrichment program. These programs can range from stress management to good nutrition to arts and crafts. These sessions become more and more important as these women begin to see their own growth and become more aware of their strengths. HIPPY is structured to ensure not only the success of the child but also the success of the parent. Most parents feel an immediate sense of gratification, because they have been given good, creative, and educationally sound material. Just as important, they feel confident and competent to work with their children. They have a support system built into HIPPY with the group meeting and a strong program coordinator. A bond develops between the paraprofessional and the mother and this bond leads to an increasing awareness of those women's self-esteem and self-confidence.

The packets of programmed material that each mother works with has been carefully developed, concentrating on language, discrimination skills, and problem-solving. Language instruction centers around the story books that each family receives. The parent will learn how to ask questions about details of content, vocabulary and concepts. These books follow the same course as the daily lessons or worksheets. The worksheets serve as guide for sensory discrimination skills, including visual, auditory, and tactile exercises. Problem solving involves listing, sorting, matching, and grouping attributes and ideas. The degree of difficulty increases through the two year period.

During the 1986-87 school year, HIPPY served approximately five hundred families in four communities in Arkansas. This year, HIPPY expanded into six additional communities. One thousand children and their families are currently participating. The Little Rock program has almost three hundred children enrolled, while Wilmot, Arkansas, a tiny town of approximately eleven hundred, has thirty five in HIPPY. The programs stretch from the Oklahoma line to the Mississippi Delta.

These communities have developed their programs and solicited their funding in several unique ways. From the beginning it was apparent that individual school districts would not have the large amounts of money necessary to administer and carry out this program. We have, therefore, chosen to look at HIPPY from many different angles. Initially, we had hoped for foundation money, and we received money from Ford, New World, Edna McConnell Clark and Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation for a part of our first year operations. However, more money was needed. As we studied the program, we came to a greater appreciation of the effect on the mothers. In doing so, we recognized the connection with adult education, literacy, and employable skills. We have been able to secure large amounts of money from the JTPA Administrative Entities. By working closely with the Arkansas State Department of Education and local school districts, we have been able to utilize Chapter I and II funds. We also have received commitments from school boards for direct financial aid over and above their in-kind contributions. We hope in the coming year to increase financial support by promoting HIPPY within the business community and introducing it to additional local and state government officials.

While there is extensive data available for the Israeli program, information on HIPPY in the United States is limited. In Arkansas, we have begun to gather weekly data sheets on each child and mother involved in the program. We have completed the first of the parent assessments. We will soon begin to collect demographic information on all of our families. With a grant from Ford Foundation, we hope to compile and study the results through the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In addition, each site does pre testing and will post test its children at the end of kindergarten. We believe we will have good substantial data to begin evaluating by the end of this current school year.

When we first began studying HIPPY in Arkansas, emphasis was on the child. If the child did well, then the mother would enjoy a feeling of success. Now, in Arkansas and throughout the nation where HIPPY is being implemented, the focus appears to be shifting towards the mother's growth. If we are able to give her a program where she can teach her child and make a positive contribution to his or her education, if we can help her realize the possibilities of growth within herself, if we can open doors for her that have never before been open for her, then we have helped not only her and her child but the entire family. The results are better, more successful students, and parents who have learned to communicate with their children and appreciate their own qualities and strengths. We believe that HIPPY will have an overall, positive impact on drop-out prevention and parent involvement in the public schools. We believe that mothers will develop employable skills and be able to take their first steps toward financial independence. If given a chance, the Home Instruction Program may well be the motivation that is needed to break the cycle of poverty and dependence that enslaves so many. HIPPY offers a helping hand to those who dare dream of a better life.

Mr. COATS. Thank you.

Our final witness is Marcella Taylor.

STATEMENT OF MARCELLA TAYLOR, SENIOR OFFICER, CENTER FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Ms. TAYLOR. Good morning. I hope that I can keep your attention on what I have to say and not on the clock for these next five minutes. I am very glad to be here representing the Indiana Department of Education at this hearing.

The Department has, for many years, demonstrated its respect for the parents' roles in the education of their children. In the late 1970s the Division of Reading conducted parent participation workshops for any school upon request. There were probably a minimum of 15 to 20 requests fulfilled per year. There were three television series specifically for parents produced. One was on mathematics, called "Mathmatters", "The R Connection", which was on reading, and "Reading 'Round the House.", another one on reading, all specifically for parents. There was produced a series of ten pamphlets on reading especially for parents as far back as 1977. Last year another 22-topic series was produced, the point here being that we reached out to parents in media that we thought would appeal to them and would be helpful to them and in an effort to help them help their children.

The Chapter 1 Division of the Department held statewide conferences for parents in 1984 and 1985, and three regional ones in 1986. Informational pamphlets specifically geared to Chapter 1 were made available at those conferences and to schools upon their request for distribution to their parent populations. Through these efforts, along with the migrant program, which has involved parents significantly throughout their program years, we have reached thousands of parents. Through the Department of Education in Indiana, parents have been supported, encouraged, guided, instructed and responded to with a high level of commitment.

More recently, under State Superintendent H. Dean Evans' administration, an internal committee of Department personnel was established to examine ways that the Department could be even more instrumental. Significant was the fact that although there had been a good deal of activity throughout the Department, there was not a cohesive department-wide policy, and so steps were taken to formulate that policy under Dr. Evans particular caring about the family and parents.

The 1987 General Assembly established several initiatives that include parental involvement. One is the new school accreditation structure during which the parental and community involvement facet will be examined. The at-risk moneys that have been legislated contain a program topic that enables schools to spend their allocation on parent and community involvement, if that's what they choose to do, and finally, the Committee on Student Attitudes, Motivation, and Parental Involvement has been working very diligently over the summer.

The charge to this committee is to study the attitudes of students toward the educational process in public schools; to develop methods to motivate students to learn; to develop methods to create and maintain a positive public perception within each local community and within Indiana toward the public schools; and to develop guidelines for the awards of grants to schools. There has been made available $30,000 and grants of $1,000 will be awarded in December of 1987.

Other recent activities that have been undertaken by the Department to raise the awareness level of the need for increasing the extent of parental involvement and its positive effect on student achievement are in an affective vein.

"Pointers for Parents", which is a packet of information for parents, has been developed and distributed through the state fair when that was conducted, reaching a large number of parents, and also they are available again for distribution through elementary schools. There is an accompanying parent commitment card that parents might use as a contract, which was mentioned earlier.

Slogan-style messages have been created for use on electronic scoreboards at the Indiana Colts professional football games—of which there will probably be a larger number of fans now—bumper stickers for vehicles, and grocery sacks and utility or bank billing statements will contain messages to parents. The bumper stickers are to read, "Parents: Your Child's Success Builds Hoosier Pride", and "Teachers: Give Your Best, Expect Their Best."

Dr. Evans has been writing a twice-monthly newspaper column called "Parent Line". He reviews research and reminds parents about the importance of their involvement in their childrens' learning.

The Indiana Department of Education will continue to assume a leadership role and to collaborate with local schools and related agencies to an even more mutually successful parental participation.

Thank you for your attention.

[Prepared statement of Marcella Taylor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARCELLA TAYLOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, STATE OF INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

The Indiana Department of Education has, for many years, demonstrated its respect for parents' role in the education of their children.

In the late 70s The Division of Reading conducted parent participation workshops for any school upon request. We probably filled 15-20 requests a year. We did 3 television series for parents: "Mathmatters", "The R Connection", and "Reading 'Round the House". We produced a series of ten pamphlets on reading especially for parents in 1977 and another 22 topic series in 1986.

The Chapter 1 Division held statewide conferences for parents in 1984 and 1985 and three regional ones in 1986.

We have reached thousands of parents. Through the Department of Education in Indiana parent have been supported, encouraged, guided, instructed, and responded to with a high level of commitment.

Under State Superintendent, H. Dean Evans' administration, in June 1986 an internal committee of Department of Education personnel was established to study ways the Department could be instrumental in increasing the level of parental involvement in Indiana's public schools. The activities of the committee included:

a. An internal assessment of the Department's Parent Involvement policies and practices.

b. An external survey of parent and community activities in Indiana's public schools.

c. A survey of parent involvement activities in other states.

d. Formation of a statewide task force.

The statewide task force made several recommendations to Superintendent H. Dean Evans. The recommendations were on three levels--state, district, and school as the activities undertaken by each would be different.

With the assistance of the Department's internal committee, the task force reviewed the research findings on the effect of parental involvement. Five factors were established as to contributing to successful parent/school partnerships:

1. Positive home conditions that support school learning.

2. Communciation by schools with parents about programs and about the child's progress.

3. Volunteer efforts by parents not only as assistants in classrooms but also as audience participants in student performances, sports, and other events, or in parent workshops.

4. Assistance of children at home in learning activities coordinated with the class work upon request of teachers.

5. Decision-making roles of parents in school governance and school advocacy in PTA/PTO, on advisory councils, or as independent activists in other community organizations.

The 1987 General Assembly established the Committee on Student Attitudes, Motivation, and Parental Involvement. The charge to this committee is to:

a. Study the attitudes of students toward the educational process in public schools.

b. Develop methods to motivate students to learn.

c. Develop methods to create and maintain a positive public perception within each local community and within Indiana toward the public schools.

d. Develop methods to encourage increased parental and community involvement with the public schools.

e. Develop guidelines for the awards of grants.

Guidelines have gone out to all school corporations. Grants of $1,000 will be awarded December 1987.

Activities that have been undertaken by the Department to raise the awareness level of the need for increasing the extent of parental involvement and its positive effect on student achievement are:

-- Symposium on Parental Involvement, a full-day seminar for about 150 persons sponsored by the Department of Education at the Indiana University Northwest campus in Gary on September 30 as part of the Restructuring Schools Project of the National Governors' Association with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation.

-- Speaking engagement at the symposium and with the Department of Education staff by Carl Marburger, co-author of Beyond the Bake Sale, a book encouraging teachers to involve parents more at school.

-- "Pointers for Parents", 5,000 envelopes with pamphlets and information for parents, distributed for reproduction to each elementary school principal.

-- Slogan-style messages created for use on (1) electronic scoreboards at the Indiana Colts professional football games; (2) bumper stickers for vehicles; and (3) grocery sacks and utility or bank billing statements. The bumper stickers are to read: "Parents: Your Child's Success Builds Hoosier Pride," and "Teachers: Give Your Best, Expect Their Best."

-- A twice-monthly newspaper column called "Parent Line" is being written by Superintendent H. Dean Evans to review research and remind parents about the importance to their involvement in their children's learning.

cf

Mr. Coats. You did very well. Thank you very much.

I want to thank each of our panelists. We're cognizant of the time here and the conference that's beginning today. As I said before, all of your written statements will be made part of the record. We thank you for your contributions and for the efforts that you are making.

We look forward to this as a continuing process. I think we're on the verge here of either establishing or reestablishing a very critical element in the educational process, and that is the involvement of parents. Your suggestions and comments and programs are going to be very helpful in this process. We hope to keep talking about it at our level and we hope you will keep talking about it at yours, and we hope we can involve the entire country in the process of involving parents in schools.

Thanks again to each of the panelists, and thanks to all of those who participated this morning. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 noon, the committee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record:]

Offset Folios 204 to 208 Insert here

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LINDA A. SHOPOFF, PRESIDENT OF THE INDIANA CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS INC., INDIANAPOLIS, IN

The Indiana Congress of Parents and Teachers represents over fifty-four thousand members throughout our State. Members of the Indiana PTA join with the members of every other State in the United States as well as the European Congress of PTA to form the National PTA. For more than 90 years the National PTA has been an advocate for all children and youth. More than 6 million members comprise one of the oldest and largest volunteer organizations.

As advocates for children we are aware that parental involvement has been identified as an integral part of a child's education. The New York Times stated December 11, 1985, "In a survey teachers say that the lack of parental involvement is more damaging to education than a lack of money for schools or a lack of discipline among students." Research shows that in schools where parents are encouraged to participate in the school environment, educational gains are evident.

The National PTA and the Indiana PTA have long recognized that Parental Involvement is an essential part of a parent's responsibility. Parental involvement begins before the child's birth and continues until the child reaches adulthood. Parental involvement has always been one of our priorities. We believe that parents not only have the responsibility but the right to be involved.

What is the connection between parent involvement and the PTA? Simply put, PTA represents parents---in partnership with teachers. Being active in PTA is a concrete sign of a parent's commitment to his or her children's education.

Administrators are also a key to successful parent involvement. Without the support and encouragement of the administration, be it principal or superintendent, parent involvement will not exist.

The Indiana PTA has identified increased parental involvement as a priority. We are committed to the belief that parents not only need to be involved but that they want to be involved. Because the traditional family has changed dramatically, many parents feel that they cannot be involved. We are encouraging our local PTA's to find new ways to involve parents. We are asking them to "reach out" to those parents who are working, those who are single and those of all races and religions.

Information on Parent-Teacher conferences and programs that touch on every aspect of parenting are available to our members.

We encourage parents to work as volunteers in the school in order to become familiar with the school while providing meaningful support to the children and the staff. Studies show that dramatic student progress, as measured by the Metropolitan Reading and Math Test, was a direct result of the assistance children received from volunteer tutors.

Involvement as participants in decision making is another role that State and National PTA believe that parents can and should assume. Setting goals and priorities for their schools, selecting textbooks, helping to develop or revise curriculum, serving on advisory committees and attending school board meetings are ways that parents can be effective and part of the school team as they work with staff.

Indiana is indeed fortunate to have Dr. H. Dean Evans, Superintendent of Public Instruction, who recognizes the value of Parental Involvement. Dr. Evans along with Governor Robert D. Orr, developed the A+ Program for Educational Excellence which our legislature passed in May, 1987. One important component of this exemplary program is parental involvement. Dr. Evans has demonstrated his commitment to involving parents by placing them on all of the committees that are charged with implementing his program. His support of our organization, as well as the support of his entire staff, has indicated to us that parents are an important part of his team.

It has been my personal experience that parental involvement is not only essential but rewarding. I have been involved for nearly twenty years in the Fort Wayne Community Schools where our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Bill Anthis, mandates parent involvement, namely PTA. Parents are not only encouraged to be involved but are kept informed on all issues. Parents serve on various committees and are consulted as to parent reaction as concerns arise. Dr. Anthis and his staff are available and accessible to parents. Parents are treated with respect and are aware that they do make a difference. Because of this, support for the schools is great and parents have a feeling of ownership in their school communities. I believe this is an achievement when you consider there are more than fifty schools in the Fort Wayne School system.

You can be sure that the Indiana PTA will continue to support parental involvement. In summation, I believe that the following National PTA position statement best reflects our position and commitment to Parental Involvement.

The National PTA believes that the primary responsibility for the education of children lies with the family. Parental involvement begins before the child's birth and should continue until the child reaches adulthood. That involvement takes many forms, including the parents's shared responsibility in decisions about the child's education, as well as the parent's participation in organizations that reflect the community's collective aspirations for the education of all children.

A Parent's Responsibilities

The parent, as a role model and initial teachers, has a responsibility to:

- safeguard and nurture the physical, mental, social and spiritual education of the child;
- instill respect for self, others and for learning;
- provide opportunities for interaction with other children and adults;
- lay the foundation for responsible citizenship;
- provide a home environment that encourages and sets an example for the child's commitment to learning;
- know, help and interact with the child's teachers and administration;
- participate in the selection of responsible school board members.

A Parent's Rights

A parent has a right to have:

- a clear, correct and complete information about the school and his individual child's progress;
- confidentiality of information about his individual child;
- clear understanding of the processes to gain access to the appropriate school officials, to participate in decisions that are made, and to appeal matters pertaining to his individual child.

Parents and other adults function outside the sphere of their own family by joining with interested parents and others to affect the education of all children.

Organizational Responsibilities

The membership of the PTA has a responsibility to:

- protect access to a quality education for all children;
- seek information on policies, curriculum and laws that affect children;
- share accurate information with its membership and the school community;
- know, help and interact with teachers and administration;
- be willing to accept responsibilities for the vitality of the PTA to assure an active PTA;
- work within the PTA and the school in a constructive manner with respect for democratic procedures and a tolerance for a diversity of opinion;
- work in partnership with school professionals to determine appropriate levels of program and services;
- participate in decisions affecting policies, rules and regulations.

Organizational Rights

A PTA organization has the right to:

- Function as an independent, nonpartisan child advocacy group;
- seek enactment of policies and practices which protect children and youth;
- participate, within school board policy, in the setting of the school goals and assist in the review of teaching materials;
- participate in decisions affecting policies, rules and regulations;
- meet with appropriate school officials to discuss matters of mutual concern affecting all children.

The National PTA supports the concepts of public schools because PTA believes they provide a common experience to ensure a democratic society. Within the rights and responsibilities of individual parents and organizations, the National PTA believes options and alternatives within the public schools should ensure that:

- the community sustain a viable public school system;
- parents have the opportunity for involvement in their children's schools;
- appropriate transportation be provided for students to ensure equity;
- specialized schools provide for a fair selection process;
- standards governing school curricula, personnel and student performance provide access to equal opportunities;
- adequate and objective information be available to parents so that they can make informed decisions.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the subject of parents and schools.

November 15, 1987

APPLE INC

Alliance to Promote a Positive Learning Environment

APPLE is a private non-profit grass-roots advocacy program made up of parents who have grown intolerant of the bureaucratic runaround they encounter when they try to resolve problems in the public schools. We feel the school system deliberately confuses, misinforms, and generally makes the parent feel incompetent to play an important role in their child's education if the parent does not agree that the system is serving the best interest of their child.

We have petitioned the district school board for changes in their disciplinary policies with some success. We plan to petition again in December for changes in the free lunch program. We have also attempted to use the system's own grievance procedures to resolve our problems and have maintained a successful average in representing students whom the system had tried to discard.

The following brief case summaries are representative of some of our concerns.

Case #1

C.S. is a 14-year old mildly mentally handicapped white male from an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in the Decatur township school district. In the last two years he was expelled from school three times. The expulsions were imposed after C.S. accumulated the allowed number of demerits for tardiness, truancy, and failure to serve detention. In the last two years C.S. has been expelled with no placement alternatives, no homebound instruction, literally put on the street for eleven months. The parents had never seen a copy of Rule S-1 or parents' rights and were not aware of any available recourse until the advocate intervened. After the third expulsion, the parent filed for an independent hearing to challenge the (non) placement. The hearing officer upheld the school district's action. That decision was appealed to the state's board of appeals where it was again confirmed. The Board of Appeals did order an SEH evaluation for C.S., but the district did not make arrangements for the testing. They did, however, put C.S. back on the street because his immunization record could not be found.

Case #2

K.R. is a 17-year old mildly mentally handicapped black male from the bused neighborhood of the Decatur school district. Last year he was expelled from school after he accumulated 30 demerits. K.R. was expelled with no placement alternatives, no homebound instruction, literally put on the street for five months. His offenses were failure to serve detention, one incident of truancy, and one incident of fighting. His parent had never seen a copy of Rule S-1 or parents' rights and were not aware of any available recourse until the advocate intervened. The parent filed for an independent hearing to challenge the (non) placement. The hearing officer upheld the school district's action. That decision was appealed to the state's board of appeals where it was again confirmed.

Case #3

N.D. is a 15-year old white female in Decatur township with a history of vision, hearing, and speech handicaps, and a behavioral disorder. This year she started her third year in the eighth grade. Last year she was expelled twice after accumulating her demerits with no placement alternatives, no homebound instruction, literally put on the street for six months. The parents had never seen a copy of Rule S-1 or parents' rights and were not aware of any available recourse until the advocate intervened. The parents filed this year for an independent hearing to challenge an obviously failed placement. After the filing, the child was again expelled for three months, back on the street. The hearing was delayed twice, then held after the child's sixteenth birthday. N.D. withdrew from the Jr. High to enroll in an adult GED program.

Case #4

B.D. is a 14-year old white male in Decatur Jr. High participating in the free lunch program. Every Monday morning B.D.'s first period teacher distributes the free lunch tickets by calling the students to his desk to claim them. B.D. does not want the other students in his class to know that his family cannot afford to buy his lunch, so he does not come forward for his ticket. However, four hours later, B.D. is hungry. He goes through the cafeteria line and tells the cashier he has lost his ticket. The cashier refuses him a meal. B.D. calls his parent, his parent calls the school, and is told that B.D. can have a peanut butter sandwich and a carton of milk if he will go back through the line and request it. Again, B.D. chooses not to risk the social stigma of sitting down with his peanut butter sandwich next to his peers who have a full meal. B.D. has a record of behavioral infractions, particularly in his afternoon classes. He has been expelled three times.

It is our understanding that the state receives its federal funds based on a head count taken in the fall. However, in the 1985-86 school year, 30% of the students in Decatur's Jr. High and High School were suspended or expelled. Many of these students were handicapped, bused, and/or on the free lunch program. The funds were provided for a year's worth of services that were not provided for a full year. It is our belief that the children who should be deriving benefit from these federally funded programs are being systematically removed from the programs. It is also our belief that it is too profitable for the state of Indiana and Decatur township to receive funds for services, and then simply not provide them.

Additional documentation and individual case files are available

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